THE LIFESTYLE OF THE YOUNG WAGE-EARNER IN INTER-WAR MANCHESTER, c 1919-1939.

DAVID M. FOWLER.

Department of History, University of Manchester.

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The subject of this thesis is the lifestyle of the young wage-earner in one provincial city, Manchester, in the 1920s and 1930s. The thesis explores the lifestyle of boy and girl wage-earners from the time they began working full-time for wages at about the age of 14 (but earlier in some cases) to about the age of 21. It is, therefore, essentially a study of teenage wage-earners and, to be more precise, a study of teenage wage-earners from the working-class.

The thesis attempts to provide a more comprehensive picture of the lives of teenage working-class wage-earners in the 1920s and 1930s than either historians or sociologists have so far achieved. It examines a number of issues which have been overlooked in existing studies, but which were nevertheless important to the young wage-earner: his or her experiences on the labour market (Chapter 1); his or her attitude towards work and employers (Chapter 2); whether the young wage-earner was afflicted by unemployment or not (Chapter 3) and whether the young wage-earner was the chief beneficiary of the tremendous growth and diversification of commercialised entertainment in the 1920s and 1930s (Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

It is argued that the lives of young wage-earners in Manchester were nothing like as circumscribed by the wishes of parents, employers and other authority figures as recent work on this subject, notably the work of Elizabeth Roberts, has suggested. Young wage-earners locally displayed a considerable degree of autonomy in both the work sphere and in the leisure sphere. In the latter sphere, they were the chief beneficiaries of the expansion of commercialised entertainment in the period; indeed, Chapter 4 argues that they were embryonic 'teenage consumers'. Their spending patterns and leisure behaviour generally were strikingly similar to the spending patterns and leisure behaviour of post-war 'teenagers'. A range of sources testify to this: the detailed reports of the spending patterns of young working-class wage-earners compiled by social investigators; newspaper advertisements; the comments of newspaper columnists and columnists for magazines; the comments of local youth leaders and oral and written accounts by those who were young wage-earners in the 1920s and 1930s.

See Notes on reverse

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institution of learning.

CONTENTS.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE THESIS.

Ancoats Lads' Club - A.L.C.

Ardwick Lads' and Men's Club - A.L.M.C.

Daily Dispatch - D.D.

Daily Express - D.E.

Daily Herald - D.H.

Daily Worker - D.W.

Day Continuation School - D.C.S.

Economic History Review - Ec.H.R.

English Historical Review - E.H.R.

Greater Manchester Record Office - G.M.R.O.

Heyrod Street Men's and Lads' Club, Manchester - H.S.M.L.C.

Hugh Oldham Lads' Club, Manchester - H.O.L.C.

Human Factor - H.F.

International Review of Social History - I.R.S.H.

Jewish Chronicle - J.C.

Jewish Gazette - J.G.

Jewish Lads' Brigade - J.L.B.

Journal of Contemporary History - J.C.H.

Journal of Educational Administration and History - J.E.A.H.

Journal of Further and Higher Education - J.F.H.E.

Junior Instruction Centre - J.I.C.

Juvenile Unemployment Centre - J.U.C.

Manchester and District Boy Scouts Association - M.& D.B.S.A.

Manchester and Salford Girls' Institutes - M.S.G.I.

Manchester Central Reference Library - M.C.R.L.

Manchester City News - M.C.N.

Manchester Education Committee, Juvenile Employment Bureaux - M.E.C., J.E.B.

Manchester Evening Chronicle - M.E.Ch.

Manchester Evening News - M.E.N.

Manchester Grammar School - M.G.S.

Manchester Guardian - M.G.

Manchester Juvenile Organisations Committee - M.J.O.C.

Manchester Review - M.R.

Manchester Studies, Oral History Archive, Manchester Polytechnic - M.S.O.H.A.

National Council of Public Morals - N.C.P.M.

National Council of Women - N.C.W.

New Society - N.S.

News Chronicle - N.C.

Oral History - O.H.

Oxford English Dictionary - O.E.D.

Public Record Office, Kew - P.R.O.

Social History - S.H.

Social Service Bulletin - S.S.B.

Social Service Review - S.S.R.

Social Welfare - S.W.

The Manchester Programme: Entertainments and Pleasures - T.M.P.E.P.

Young Communist League - Y.C.L.

Young Worker - Y.W.

Youth Hostel Association - Y.H.A.

Weekly Young Worker - W.Y.W.

INTRODUCTION.

In a review article which appeared almost ten years ago, the social historian Harry Hendrick appealed for 'a more comprehensive and perceptive history of youth' than either of the two books he was reviewing.[1] He wrote:

> We should not confine that history to boy scouts, club members, public schoolboys or delinquents. Such historical categorisation ignores the everyday experiences of the mass of young people who left barely any record of their grievances, their problems, or their aspirations. 2.

Ten years on, the lives of 'the mass of young people' in Britain in the recent past have still not been comprehensively analysed either by historians or by sociologists. The historian of British youth, John Springhall, acknowledges in the Introduction to his latest study, Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960 (1986) that this book 'pays insufficient attention to adolescent girls and occasionally falls into the discourtesy of referring to the 'adolescent' purely as a male phenomenon'.[3] Both Gillis's book and Stephen Humphries' book, Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood

1. Hendrick was reviewing two books: J.R.Gillis's Youth and History, Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770-Present, New York 1974, and J.Springhall's Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1940, London 1977. His article is in Social History, Volume 3, No.2, May 1978, pp.249-252.
2. id., p.252.
3. J.Springhall, Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960, Dublin 1986, p.10.

and Youth, 1889-1939 (1981) can also be criticised for overlooking girls. This thesis will attempt to examine the lives of teenage wage-earners of both sexes in one provincial city in inter-war Britain and hopefully to fill a serious gap in the existing literature on youth in recent British history.

The thesis looks at 'the everyday experiences' - on the labour market, at work, during bouts of unemployment and in the leisure sphere - of teenage wage-earners who began working full-time for wages at 14 or 15 and in some cases at an even younger age.[4] The study focuses mainly, therefore, on teenage boys and girls from working-class families. Issues that have hitherto been neglected by historians are considered in some detail: how teenage boys and teenage girls from the working-class found jobs, how often they changed jobs, their attitude towards work and employers, their autonomous action at work and how they coped with periodic bouts of unemployment. All of these topics will be discussed in Chapters 1-3 of this thesis.

The second half of the thesis focuses on the leisure sphere and examines how teenage wage-earners in the inter-war period occupied their leisure hours. This subject has also received only patchy coverage from historians of working-class youth and from historians of the working-class family. Humphries, for instance, an historian of 'working-class

4.See below, pp.46-47 and Table 3,Note 1 in the Appendix.

youth', has only really looked at the perennial leisure pursuits of boys, such as being in a street gang and baiting symbols of authority such as policemen and unpleasant neighbours.[5] He therefore overlooks important changes that were taking place in the leisure sphere in the inter-war period; changes which Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis will argue were transforming the lives of teenage wage-earners outside the workplace. In particular, teenage wage-earners from working-class families were the chief recipients of the enormous growth and diversification of commercialised leisure in the period under study. Dance hall managers, cinema managers and other entrepreneurs who were active in the leisure sphere began to provide entertainment specifically for the 'young, free and single' working-class wage-earner in this period. Manufacturers, too, began to advertise their products - clothes, cosmetics, motor-cycles and soft drinks, for instance - in magazines which were either aimed at the young wage-earner or known to be read by the young wage-earner in the 1920s and 1930s.[6]

Chapter 4 of this thesis will examine the wealth of contemporary evidence which points to the emergence of a youth market for consumer products and leisure services like cinemas and dance halls in this period. It will also take issue with those sociologists of post-war youth who argue that the working-class youth who had a significant amount of money to

5. See S.Humphries, Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth, 1889-1939, Oxford 1981, especially Chapters 5 and 7.
6. See below, Chapter 4.

spend on leisure was a product of the 'affluent' 1950s.[7] Chapter 5 will then look at middle-class anxieties about well paid working-class youths which surfaced in the inter-war period and will focus on a 'moral panic' of sorts, which occurred long before the one over the questionable behaviour of Mods and Rockers in the early 1960s.[8] It will consider whether inter-war cinemas were responsible, as some Chief Constables and at least one local youth leader claimed, for the so-called juvenile 'crime-wave' in the 1930s; it will look at the other so-called 'deleterious' effects the cinema was said to have on young people and assess whether there was any truth in the critics' fears.

The final chapter, Chapter 6, looks at the impact the young wage-earners' increasing desire to spend money on commercialised entertainments had on youth movements in inter-war Manchester. It is argued that Lads' Clubs in the city were transformed in the '20s and '30s. From being sedate retreats where working-class boys could pursue wholesome leisure activities such as chess, reading and book-keeping, these institutions were turned into embryonic youth clubs equipped with billiard tables, film projectors, wirelesses and in one case a

7. For one of the chief exponents of this view, see Simon Frith's work, especially his article, 'Time To Grow Up' in New Society, 4th.April 1986, pp.12-14. For earlier work by sociologists putting forward the same thesis, see S.Hall and T.Jefferson (eds.), Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain, London 1976, especially the chapter by G.Murdock and R. McCron.
8. On the latter, see S.Cohen, Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers, London 1972.

roller-skating rink.[9] In other words, local youth leaders were forced to modify the purpose of their work in this period in response to the demands of the members for more modern forms of entertainment.

The second half of this thesis will attempt to show, therefore, that the inter-war period was a period of significant change in the way teenage wage-earners of both sexes from the working-class occupied their leisure hours. It will, however, also be argued that teenage wage-earners were not simply passive consumers either of commercialised leisure provided for them by businessmen, or of non-commercialised 'wholesome' and 'uplifting' leisure pursuits which youth leaders sought to provide. Teenage wage-earners - at least in Manchester - used institutions like cinemas, dance halls and youth movements for their own purposes. They dictated the types of entertainment they wanted in the Lads' Clubs, for instance, and the leaders were forced to respond to their demands.[10] In the work sphere, too, as Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis will show, young wage-earners displayed considerable autonomy.

9. See below, pp.300-304.
10. See below, Chapter 6.

A considerable range of sources have been consulted for this thesis. The records of key institutions in the lives of teenage wage-earners have been used, such as the city's Juvenile Employment Bureaux reports and the manuscript and printed records of numerous youth organisations which were active in the city. In addition, printed Census reports, Home Office records, Ministry of Labour reports, newspapers, Parliamentary reports, reports by Manchester Education Committee, the city's Chief Constable's annual reports and a number of other reports produced by independent social investigators have been used and shed much light on the labour market behaviour of teenage wage-earners, their experiences of unemployment and their leisure interests. Humphries, in his study of 'working-class youth' in this period, rejected manuscript and printed records because these sources were written by middle-class adults who, he argued, had a 'biased and distorted view of... working-class youth'.[11] This thesis will try to show that, if used carefully, such sources do shed light on the behaviour and concerns of teenage wage-earners in this period. The fact that they were written by middle-class adults should not deter the historian with a critical and probing mind.

Oral accounts of teenage life in the inter-war period will also be used, where appropriate. Oral history is a valuable source for finding out more, for instance, about

11.Humphries, op.cit., p.3.

the leisure habits of teenage wage-earners and particularly about the gangs of youths that regularly visited dance halls in Belle Vue and Stretford shortly after the First World War to pick up girls and taunt other gangs.[12] Other material used includes autobiographies written by those who were teenage wage-earners in the 1920s and 1930s, and reports written by individuals who observed the behaviour of teenage wage-earners, such as University academics, settlement workers and those who worked for the independent organisation, Mass Observation, which was set up in 1937.

Finally, something needs to be said about the terms used in this thesis and about those which have been eschewed. This thesis, as indicated, is about young wage-earners of both sexes and, more specifically, about teenage wage-earners of both sexes; that is, 14 to 19 year olds. The subjects under study are therefore frequently referred to as teenage boys, teenage girls and teenage wage-earners. It might be argued that these terms are anachronisms at this period; but a thorough search through various dictionaries has revealed two things: firstly, that girls and boys 'in their teens' have been recognised as a distinct group in Britain since the seventeenth century and, secondly, that the other terms which might be used to describe the subjects of this thesis are less

12. See below, pp. 232-234.

useful.[13] The term 'adolescent', for instance, refers to 'a youth between childhood and manhood' according to the O.E.D.[14] It is quite clear from this definition that the term is an inappropriate one for describing the subjects of this thesis. There are two problems with it. Firstly, it is too vague; it does not refer specifically to boys and girls in their teens. Secondly, as the O.E.D. definition makes clear, it has male connotations which also makes it inappropriate since this thesis is about girls as well as boys. The term 'youth' has been eschewed for the same reasons. No age-group is specified in the O.E.D.'s definition of 'youth' ('A young person; especially a young man between boyhood and mature age'), and, as with the term 'adolescent', this one also has male connotations.[15]

Having defined the subjects of this thesis, Chapter 1 will attempt to show that this is a comprehensive study of the teenage wage-earner in one provincial city. The theme of the chapter is the labour market behaviour of 14 to 20 year olds and it will focus not just on teenage wage-earners in manual jobs (the overwhelming majority of teenage wage-earners in the city), but on teenage white-collar workers too. Subsequent chapters will also consider both groups of workers.

13. On the first point, see The Oxford English Dictionary (O.E.D.), Volume XI, Oxford repr. 1970, p.141. The following expression appeared in a dancing magazine published in 1673: 'Your poor young things, when they are once in the teens, they think they shall never be married' (ibid).
14. O.E.D., Volume I, Oxford repr. 1970, p.123.
15. O.E.D., Volume XII, Oxford repr. 1970, p.77.

CHAPTER 1: 'INDUSTRIAL NOMADS'?: THE LABOUR MARKET BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG WAGE-EARNERS.

'No father with an assured income would throw his child into the labour market to sink or swim at 14', wrote a London youth leader in August 1928.[1] The vast majority of the teenage age-group, however, left school at the earliest opportunity in the inter-war period. In practice, this meant that even at the end of the period, in 1938, seven out of every ten children entered the adult labour market at the age of 14.[2] And yet, despite this, remarkably little is known about young people's experiences on the labour market in this period. Historians have certainly devoted scant attention to the subject. Little is known, for instance, about basic questions such as how young people found jobs, why they chose to enter certain occupations, and how often they changed jobs. More is known about youth unemployment in inter-war Britain but historians are still divided over whether the 14-18 age-group

1. W.McG.Eagar, 'The Next Step in Education' in S.S.B., Volume IX, No.8, August 1928, p.139.
2. J.Jewkes and S.Jewkes, The Juvenile Labour Market, London 1938, p.11.

in particular were afflicted by unemployment or not.[3]

These serious gaps in historical accounts of the teenage age-group in the inter-war period seem particularly surprising because all of the issues raised above perplexed academics, educationalists and youth workers at the time. William McG.Eagar's statement, cited above, is one indication of this concern but other commentators were more explicit as to why they were worried about young wage-earners from the working-class in particular at this period. Ernest S.Griffith and R.A. Joseph, who ran the University Settlement in Liverpool, argued that the typical working-class boy in Liverpool was 'an industrial nomad' who held down a job for no more than nine months on average.[4] Such behaviour, they felt, prevented boys from learning any useful industrial skills, exposed them to periodic bouts of unemployment in their teens and probably restricted

3. Humphries, op.cit., seriously neglects the working-class youth's experiences on the labour market and at work. For the only historical work on this subject at this period, see J.White, The Worst Street in North London: Campbell Bunk, Islington, Between the Wars, London 1986, pp.161-164, 188-192; E.Roberts, A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women, 1890-1940, Oxford 1984, repr. 1985, Chapter 2, and D.Gittins, Fair Sex: Family Size and Structure, 1900-39, London 1982, Chapter 3. The latter two studies, as will be obvious, only consider the working-class girl's labour market behaviour. For a discussion of their main conclusions, see below, pp.61-62. For the debate about youth unemployment in inter-war Britain, see W.R.Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars', Ec.H.R. , Second Series, Vol.XXX, No.2, May 1977, pp.322-339; D.K.Benjamin and L.A.Kochin, 'What went Right with Juvenile Unemployment Policy between the Wars: A Comment', Ec.H.R., Vol.XXXII, No.4, November 1979, pp.523-528; W.R.Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment between the Wars: A Rejoinder', Ec.H.R., Vol.XXXII, No.4, November 1979, pp.529-532. See also M.A.Crowther, British Social Policy 1914-1939, London 1988, pp.44-6. See below, Chapter 3 for a discussion of youth unemployment in inter-war Manchester.

4. E.S.Griffith and R.A.Joseph, 'The Unknown Years', S.S.B., Vol.IX, No.7, July 1928, p.114.

them to casual labouring jobs as adults.[5]

Many other things relating to the labour market behaviour of young wage-earners of both sexes disturbed middle-class professionals at this period. Joan L.Harley, a research student at Manchester University in the 1930s, believed that working-class girls were open to all kinds of dangers once they left the protective environment of school for the cut and thrust of the adult world of work. She argued that, on becoming a wage-earner, the 14 year old girl immediately became 'unstable (in) character'; a malady which was brought on by 'the business of wage-earning and in the excitement of the independence which wage-earning brings'.[6] But just how accurately did middle-class investigators depict the labour market for young wage-earners at this period ? Were their fears shared by young people themselves ? These questions, though difficult to answer, will be considered in this chapter.

The chapter will focus mainly, though not exclusively, on the labour market behaviour of teenage wage-earners in Manchester. It is divided into two sections. The first section

5. id., pp.113-118.
6. J.L.Harley, 'Report of an enquiry into the occupations, further education and leisure interests of a number of girl wage-earners from elementary and central schools in the Manchester district, with special reference to the influence of school training on their use of leisure', unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Manchester , Manchester 1937, p.36.

will look at the types of jobs local teenage boys and girls entered after leaving school, at how often they changed jobs and at the overall state of the labour market for the teenage age-group locally in the 1920s and 1930s. This section, which will focus on developments at a 'macro' level, will then be followed by a discussion of the labour market behaviour of teenage wage-earners at a 'micro' level. Three issues will be considered in this second section: the alleged 'transition' from school to wage-earning work which working-class children apparently underwent at about the age of 14; the extent to which young people from working-class families chose the jobs they entered and, thirdly, the neglected question of how teenage boys and girls from the working-class found jobs. It is as well to begin, however, with the 'macro' picture.

Every year in the 1920s between 9,000 and 10,000 14 year olds entered the adult labour market of Manchester in search of full-time paid employment. At the Census of 1921, 68% of all the boys in the city between the ages of 14 and 16, and 59% of all the girls in this age-group were 'occupied'; that is, outside full-time education and either in full-time paid work or seeking it. An even greater proportion of 16-20 year olds of both sexes were on the labour market or in work in 1921: 96% of all the boys between 16 and 20 and 86% of all the girls. At the Census of 1931, around 90% of all the boys in the city between the ages of 14 and 21 and over 80% of all the girls in this age-group were either in

work or seeking it.[7]

Two things should be obvious from the above statistics. Firstly, the vast majority of 14-20 year olds of both sexes in Manchester were either on the labour market or in full-time employment throughout this period. In fact, more girls than boys were in 1931 (40,407 girls compared with 39,275 boys), and only slightly fewer girls than boys were either in paid work or looking for paid work in 1921: 32,807 girls as against 34,555 boys.[8] Secondly, the statistics indicate that only a minority of teenage boys and girls remained in full-time education beyond the age of 14.

Further evidence is available on this point. In 1925, when there were said to be 45,000 in the 14-18 age-group, less than 7,000 of these (6,930) were in full-time education.[9] The number had only increased slightly by 1931, but at that date 19 and 20 year olds were included in the figures. Thus, the 7,681 in full-time education in April 1931 seems miniscule in comparison with the 92,796 14-20 year olds in the local population at this date; and, of course, middle-class youngsters were included in this figure.[10] Census

7. See below Tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix. See also Manchester Education Committee (M.E.C.), General Survey 1914-1924, Manchester 1926, pp.132-135; Census of England and Wales 1921, County of Lancaster, London 1923, Table 19.
8. See below Tables 3 and 4 in the Appendix.
9. M.E.C., op.cit., p.107.
10. Census of England and Wales 1931, Occupation Tables, London 1934, Table 18. The number of students in full-time education was not enumerated at the Census of 1921.

statistics, it must be remembered, take no account of class inequalities in educational opportunities and these were especially marked throughout the inter-war period.[11]

Manchester Education Committee (M.E.C.) implied that opportunities for working-class children to carry on in full-time education were increasing during the 1920s:

> From many homes which have never previously sent a child into a Central or Secondary School there now come... children who by their natural ability are able to win their way to higher institutions in competition with their fellows.12.

But this optimism was not reflected in its own statistics. Only a very small proportion of the elementary school pupils in the city transferred to secondary and central schools in 1925 (between one-seventh and one-eighth of elementary school pupils in that year), and only a minority of secondary and central school pupils even remained in full-time education beyond the age of 14.[13] The pressures on working-class youngsters to leave school for good at 14 will become evident

11. See especially A.H.Halsey (ed.), Trends in British Society Since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain, London 1972, pp.163, 182, 189.
12. M.E.C., op.cit., p.26.
13. id., p.107. There were 10,380 pupils attending secondary and central schools in the city in 1925. Only 4,040 of these stayed on at school beyond the age of 14.

later but a Clayton Girls' School log book contained the following entry as late as July 1933:

> Thirteen girls were awarded Secondary School Scholarships but up to the present only four girls have accepted. The parents wish the children to become wage-earners at the age of fourteen years.14.

The supply of secondary education in the city can even be said to have contracted overall during this period. In 1918, there were four municipal secondary schools with accommodation for 2,800 pupils and there were four independent secondary schools. The number of places available in these schools was 4,500, 25% of which were taken up by children and young people from outside Manchester.[15] By 1934, the number of places in the maintained secondary schools was only 4,034 and the number of central schools had actually fallen from twenty to eleven.[16]

A number of the 14-16 age-group received part-time instruction in evening classes during this period. But out of 10,890 in both sexes who attended evening schools in Manchester in 1925, no less than 40% of these were older than 18.[17] Indeed,what most struck Manchester's Education Committee

14. Seymour Road Municipal Girls' School, Clayton, Log Book 1907-1933, Manchester Central Reference Library (M.C.R.L.), Archives Department (M66/134/Box 1).
15. S.D.Simon, A Century of City Government: Manchester 1838-1938, London 1938, pp.269-70.
16. ibid.
17. M.E.C., op.cit., p.107.

was that roughly 60% of the 14-18 age-group were 'deprived entirely of the benefits and social influence of school life and instruction' in 1925.[18] This situation, if anything, worsened throughout the remainder of the inter-war period since a comprehensive survey of youth in the city in 1940 concluded:

> We cannot speak of home life and of all the unorganised interests of youth, but we now know that over 70 per cent, nearly three-quarters, of the youth of the city are untouched by church, party, or voluntary organisation, club or night school.19.

What occupations did teenage boys and girls who were on the labour market from the age of 14 enter at this period ? Judging by the questions asked in a number of the inter-war social surveys, hardly anything was known about the occupations 14 and 15 year olds entered on leaving school. They were not admitted to the Unemployment Insurance Scheme until 1934 and they were largely hidden from statistical records of any kind before 1934. 'Comparatively few remain in school beyond the age of fourteen', pointed out the authors of the Merseyside Survey (published in 1934).

18. ibid.
19. C.F.Carter, 'Youth Work in Manchester, The Report of the Youth Survey' in S.W., Volume IV, No.6, October 1940, p.108.

> From then for the space of two years they disappear from public view until at sixteen they become insurable... What happens to them when they leave school ? Do they soon secure work and begin to earn a living ? How do they get work and how long do they manage to retain it ? What sort of wages do they earn and how many hours a day do they work ? What are their leisure interests ? How many of them join a club or similar organisation which may be of assistance in keeping them 'straight' ? What proportion attend continuation classes in order to improve their education after leaving school ? These are only a few of the questions to which answers would be of interest. 20.

Similar questions were asked by Jewkes and Winterbottom in their survey of juvenile unemployment in Lancashire and Cumberland, published in 1933. 'How rapidly ', they asked,

> were school leavers obtaining employment ? Were they obtaining 'progressive' or blind-alley jobs ? Were secondary school leavers more successful in gaining jobs than elementary school leavers ? 21.

Owing to the inability of census data on 'juveniles' to provide answers to any of these questions, academics like the economist John Jewkes from the University of Manchester

20. D.Caradog Jones (ed.), The Social Survey of Merseyside, Volume 3, London 1934, pp.201-2.
21. J.Jewkes and A.Winterbottom, Juvenile Unemployment, London 1933, pp.25-6.

and D.Caradog Jones from the University of Liverpool were forced to undertake detailed and painstaking sample surveys of adolescents and their early industrial experiences during the early 1930s.[22] Jewkes's research team in the Department of Economics and Commerce at Manchester, for instance, began research on juvenile employment and unemployment in Lancashire in September 1931. Their first enquiry was certainly an extensive one. It attempted to trace the early employment 'histories' of all school leavers who left Lancashire County Council schools between 1 August 1930 and 31 July 1931.[23] Manchester was not included in the survey but in the districts which were included it was discovered that the official employment agencies for 'juveniles' had little idea of the employment circumstances of 14 and 15 year olds in their areas. The majority of the Juvenile Employment Bureaux and Juvenile Employment Advisory Committees throughout the County were only able to provide the enquiry with information on those who had left school in July 1931, i.e. two months earlier. This led the author of the first Manchester University survey to conclude:

22. See, in addition to the studies by Jewkes and Caradog Jones, Griffith and Joseph, op.cit.; A.D.K.Owen, A Survey of Juvenile Employment and Welfare in Sheffield, Sheffield 1933.
23. A Winterbottom, An Enquiry Into The Employment of Juveniles in Lancashire, Manchester 1932, pp.6-7.

> A continuous and detailed study of the constitution of the labour force in the first two years of working life and of the trends affecting it is a condition precedent to any effective control of the flow of juveniles into industry. 24.

But the gaps in the statistical records kept by L.E.A.s on 'new entrants into industry' had still not been rectified by 1939. J.Hallsworth, in his study of the working conditions of shop and office workers, found that:

> Statistics as to the extent of child and juvenile labour and the effects of legislation on such labour are not compiled and published annually by the responsible Government Departments in England and Wales or in Scotland. 25.

A number of contemporary studies also drew attention to the difficulties involved in using existing statistical data to calculate the incidence of unemployment among young people. Jewkes and Winterbottom, after two major attempts to measure the extent of juvenile unemployment in Lancashire, declared in a 1933 study:

> At the present time it is impossible for any individual or any authority to state how many children between the ages of fourteen and eighteen years are unemployed.

24. id., pp.5-7, 22.
25. J.Hallsworth, Protective Legislation for Shop and Office Employees, 3rd Edtn. ,London 1939, p.135.

This, they argued, was principally due to the two year 'gap' outlined earlier which, until the Unemployment Act of 1934, meant that 14 and 15 year olds were not obliged to register themselves for employment if unemployed, and had no incentive to do so since they received no unemployment benefit until 1934.[26]

It would appear, therefore, that the two year period during which the majority of young people in the inter-war period left school and entered full-time employment was as much a subject for speculation and concern, even by the 1930s, as one about which anything concrete was known. The Jewkes team attempted to rectify this by employing voluntary workers to visit the homes of 2,000 elementary school leavers in St.Helens, Burnley, Warrington, Ashton-under-Lyne and Atherton, at three to four month intervals, between 1934 and 1936.[27] Joan L.Harley did a similar thing in Manchester in 1935 but her efforts to maintain contact with 169 ex-elementary and ex-central school girls were much less successful.[28] There is, therefore, a basic lack of meaningful statistical data on the employment and unemployment experiences of young

26. Jewkes and Winterbottom, op.cit., p.18. See also Garside, 'Rejoinder', op.cit., pp.529-30 in which he makes the same point. See also the Unemployment Act 1934, 24 and 25 George 5, Chapter 29, Section 1(1), on the entry of 14 and 15 year olds into the unemployment insurance scheme, cited in The Public General Acts 24 and 25, Geo.5, London 1934, p.191.
27. Jewkes and Jewkes, op.cit., Introduction.
28. Joan L.Harley, op.cit., Chapter II.

Manchester workers in this period.

We can, of course, draw on the evidence produced in printed census reports. The 'juvenile' workforce of Manchester was enumerated both in 1921 and in 1931.[29] But what needs to be emphasised is that the way in which the census authorities went about this, drawing up 'condensed lists' of the city's juvenile occupational structure, conceals at least as much as it reveals about the young labour force of Manchester. Census reports only record the number of 'juveniles' in a particular occupation on a single day of the year, for instance. In fact, the Census of 1921 does not even do this since the number of 'juveniles' who were out of work at the time this Census was taken was not enumerated. Secondly, the fact that the above exercise was undertaken on only two occasions throughout the entire inter-war period thus produces an essentially static picture of the young labour force in these years. No impression is given in census tables, for instance, about the duration of employment and they throw little light on the movement between 'unskilled' and 'skilled' occupations which, as we shall see, was becoming increasingly common by the inter-war period, with the decline of the 7-year apprenticeship agreement and the growing number entering apprenticeships at the age of 16. And, thirdly, as both inter-war censuses only provided 'condensed lists' of juvenile occupations, an enormous number

29. See below Tables 3 and 4 in the Appendix for the juvenile occupational structure of Manchester at the Censuses of 1921 and 1931 and for the statistics cited in the following discussion.

of individual occupations entered into by young people remain hidden behind generalised categories like 'Metal Worker' or 'Textile Worker'.[30] In other ways, too, such categories as these produce a deceptively simple picture of the young labour force. In particular, a category like 'Metal Worker' lumped together both apprentice 'fitters' and 'fitters' mates';[31] workers who would have been more aware of their differences, both in terms of the status attached to their occupation and in terms of the degree of skill involved, than of any shared interests.[32] These and other problems make census occupational statistics an exceptionally poor guide to the ways in which young people actually experienced the labour market and an even poorer guide to the environment of work.

Having said this, because the Census provides the only exhaustive statistical account we have of the young labour force of Manchester in this period, its main features are summarised in Tables 3 and 4 in the Appendix. No systematic attempt will be made here to compare the numbers in certain occupations at the two dates, for obvious reasons. Firstly, the Census definition of the 'juvenile' workforce

30. ibid.
31. Census of 1921, op.cit, pp.3-13.
32. ibid. On the elite position of local apprentices in various industrial establishments, see below, pp.93-4, 98-106, 118-119.

in these years changed: in 1921, the lower age limit was 12 and the upper age limit 19, but at the Census of 1931, the lower age limit was 14 and the upper age limit 20. Secondly, the occupational categories used in 1921 were not the same as those used in 1931: those enumerated as 'Transport Workers' at the Census of 1921, for instance, were separated into two occupational groups, 'Transport and Communication Workers' and 'Road Transport Workers' at the Census of 1931; 'Embroiderers and Milliners' were grouped together in 1921 (under the general heading of 'Makers of Textile Goods and Articles of Dress') but 'Milliners' were grouped with 'Hat Workers' at the Census of 1931 and 'Embroiderers' were not enumerated at all; students were enumerated in 1931 but not in 1921 and so on. Finally, inter-decennial comparisons are made even more difficult by changes which are either hidden from census occupation tables (such as boundary changes),[33] or changes which are not really quantifiable (such as changes in the prestige of certain occupations).[34] With these qualifications in mind, then, what do the two inter-war censuses reveal about the young labour force of Manchester in the '20s and '30s ?

33. Manchester's boundaries were extended quite dramatically between 1921 and 1931. See Census of England and Wales, 1931, County of Lancaster, Part I, London 1932, p.23.
34. See G.Stedman Jones, Outcast London: a study in the relationship between classes in Victorian society, Oxford 1971, Appendix 1 on this.

A key feature appears to be continuity in the case of both boys' and girls' occupations. In the case of boys, 'Metal Workers' were the largest occupational 'group' in the city both in 1921 and in 1931. Just over a fifth of all the boys in the local labour force in 1921 were 'Metal Workers' and about one-seventh in 1931.[35] This 'group' included both 'skilled' workers such as apprentice fitters and only 'partly skilled' workers such as platers' labourers, riveters' labourers, drillers, machine erectors, mechanics' mates and machine minders.[36] With the exception of fitters, however, none of these sub-groups were enumerated in 1921 and only fitters, metal machinists, furnace and foundry workers and smiths were enumerated in 1931. Apprentice fitters only formed one-seventh of the total of boy 'Metal Workers' in 1921[37] and approximately one-fifth of the total in 1931;[38] and only 60% of boy 'Metal Workers' were enumerated under specific occupations in 1931.[39] Much, then, remains hidden about boy 'Metal Workers' in the city.

We can be more certain about the major occupation which attracted working-class girls in this period. The largest proportion of girls in the city, by far, worked in textiles throughout this period. In 1921, over 40% of all girls under

35. See Tables 3 and 4, Appendix.
36. Census of 1921, op.cit., pp.3-13.
37. See Census of 1921, op.cit., Table 18 for full details.
38. See Census of 1931, op.cit., Table 18.
39. ibid.

the age of 20 who were working were employed in the textile industry (over 13,000 girls in all). And, ten years later, over 15,000 girls under 21 (37% of all the girls in the labour force) worked in the local textile industry.[40]

With the exception of girls who were employed in textiles and the continually high proportion who continued to enter domestic service, no long-term pattern is more striking at this period than the number of boys who were employed as 'Messengers and Porters'. At the Census of 1911, these had formed the largest occupational group among boys under 20, numbering over 5,000.[41] There were still 3,620 boy 'Messengers and Porters' under 20 in 1921, however, and an even larger number (4, 426) under 21 in 1931.[42]

But the emphasis on continuity should not be taken too far. The city's industrial and economic base was, after all, extremely diverse by the beginning of the inter-war period and this was reflected in the occupations of working-class boys and working-class girls. Working-class boys, for instance, were not simply concentrated in the two sectors of Metal Work and Transport, although a large proportion were. There were also 2,153 male shop assistants and salesmen under

40. See below Tables 3 and 4, Appendix.
41. Census of England and Wales, 1911, Volume X, Occupations and Industries, Part II, London 1913, Table 13.
42. See Census 1921, op.cit., Table 18; Census 1931, op.cit., Table 18.

20 in 1921 and 3,743 under 21 in 1931.[43] Another 2,082 boys were 'Warehousemen and Packers' in 1921 (2,470 were 'Warehousemen and Storekeepers' in 1931).[44] A further 1,465 boys were 'Wood and Furniture Workers' in 1921 (1,795 in 1931); 1,282 boys in 1921 were 'Labourers' (3,812 were 'Labourers and Unskilled Factory Workers' in 1931) and over 1,000 boys gave their occupation as 'Textile Goods Maker' both in 1921 and in 1931, the majority at both dates being apprentice tailors. A further 1,111 boys in 1921 and 1,054 boys in 1931 were apprentices in the Electrical Industry. Over 1,000 boys in 1921 (1,070) and slightly under 1,000 in 1931 (899) were 'Textile Workers'. Another 712 boys were 'Paper Workers and Printers' in 1921 and 831 were 'Printers and Photographers' in 1931. Significant numbers of boys were employed in a host of other occupations at both dates: 267 boys were training to be 'Hairdressers and Manicurists' in 1931,[45] 706 were training to be 'Builders' (439 in 1921),[46] another 642 were training to be 'Painters and Decorators' (only 248 in 1921)[47] and 508 boys in 1931 were classified as 'Makers of Foods, Drinks and Tobacco' (410 in 1921).[48]

43. ibid.
44. See Tables 3 and 4, Appendix for these and other statistics cited below.
45. Census 1931, op.cit., Table 18.
46. ibid; Census of 1921, op.cit., Table 18.
47. ibid.
48. ibid.

Similarly, whilst an extremely high proportion of working-class girls were employed in the textile trades throughout the inter-war period, this should not be taken to imply a uniformity of work experience in these trades. 'Textile Goods Makers', for instance, were not a homogeneous group but included embroiderers, milliners, tailoresses, dress and blouse makers, sewing machinists and boot workers, all employed in a variety of trading establishments, small and large.[49] In the Jewish tailoring trades of the city, for instance:

> The typical establishment consists of six or a dozen girls working under the Jewish master in a small tenement workshop, frequently under very bad conditions. 50.

Similarly, the raincoat trade of the city in this period was carried on:

> in the upper floors of tumble-down houses in the Ancoats district. 51.

On the other hand, the 'average' Manchester tailoring establishment in this period was said to employ 'about 300' workers.[52]

49. ibid.
50. S.P.Dobbs, The Clothing Workers of Great Britain, London 1928, p.49.
51. ibid.
52. ibid.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society's tailoring establishment at Broughton, for instance, employed 300.[53] In another branch of the city's clothing trade, light dress-making, which included the manufacturing of blouses, the industrial establishments tended to be larger still. Much of the light dress-making trade of the city was in the hands of large firms like Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee and Company and Messrs.Rylands Limited. S.P.Dobbs noted in 1928 that the former firm:

> not only makes up the garments ready for sale, but itself manufactures the materials from which they are made, and does a huge home and export trade both in piece-goods and finished garments of all kinds.54.

Girls employed in the textile trades of Manchester, then, were employed in a variety of industrial settings. As well as this, they were employed in a variety of individual occupations. 'Textile Workers', like 'Textile Goods Workers', were not a homogeneous group but included winders and beamers, spinners and doublers, weavers, card frame tenters and machine knitters.[55]

Not all working-class girls in the city were employed either in Textiles or in Domestic Service

53.ibid.
54.id., p.52.
55.Census of 1921, op.cit., Table 18; Census of 1931, op.cit., Table 18.

during this period. It is worth pointing out that over 2,000 girls were employed as shop assistants in the city in 1921 and nearly 3,000 in 1931.[56] Also, nearly 2,000 'Warehousemen and Packers' in the city in 1921 were girls and 2,460 girls were 'Storekeepers and Packers' in 1931.[57] In addition to this, nearly 2,000 girls in the city were 'Paper Workers and Printers' in 1921 and over 1,000 girls in 1931 were 'Paper and Cardboard Makers and Workers'.[58]

What needs to be emphasised, then, is that girls and boys entered a range of occupations locally in this period. This was, in part, a continuation of a pre-war trend but less so in the case of girls. The number of girls employed in white-collar work in the city, for instance, appears to have quadrupled between 1911 and 1921;[59] but the number of girls employed as 'Clerks and Typists' appears to have stood still in the inter-war period (remembering that 20 year olds were also included in the 1931 figure).[60] The number of boy clerks in the city was already around 3,500 in 1911 and although the number had risen to 5,500 by 1921, it had fallen to 4,200 by 1931.[61]

56. ibid.
57. Tables 3 and 4, Appendix.
58. ibid.
59. The number of girl clerks (commercial and business) under 20 in 1911 was 1,256. But by 1921 there were 4,882 girl 'Clerks and Typists' under 20 in the city. See Census 1911, op.cit.; Table 3, Appendix for 1921 figure.
60. ibid; Table 4, Appendix.
61. See Census 1911, op.cit. ; Tables 3 and 4, Appendix.

The occupations of working-class boys and working-class girls in this period are further indicated in the 'placement' work of the city's Juvenile Employment Bureaux (J.E.B.s), which catered primarily for 14 year olds. What is particularly illustrated in their records is the sheer range of occupations open to the most recent school-leavers. Between July 1934 and June 1935, for instance, the local J.E.B.s placed over 10,000 local boys and girls into 101 different local occupations.[62] In all, 5,716 girls were found work by the J.E.B.s. A high proportion of these entered 'Office Work' (876) but a large number became Machinists (566), Shop Assistants (549) and Packers (404). Another 379 entered 'Tailoring and Dressmaking', 309 entered 'Cafe Work', 234 entered Engineering Trades, 224 became Shorthand Typists and 194 entered 'Warehouse Work'. A number of others entered occupations which are largely hidden from the census tables such as Cardboard Box- making(140); Baking and Confectionery (137); Waterproof Garment-making (121); Printing and Bookbinding (113); Bedding Manufacture (83); Domestic Work (98); Embroidery (39); Envelope-making (37); Glove-making (37); Hosiery (62); Leather Goods-making (22); Millinery (51); Mop-making (11);

62. City of Manchester Education Committee, Juvenile Employment Bureaux, (M.E.C., J.E.B.), Annual Report 1935, pp.6,8. There were four J.E.B.s undertaking 'placement' work in Manchester by 1935. The 'Central Bureau' was on Deansgate in the city centre; the three 'Branch Bureaux' were in Newton Heath, Openshaw and Withington, (id., pp.9, 10). See below, pp.73-83 for a discussion of the 'placement' work of the local Bureaux.

Pattern Card-making (61); Rubber Work (83); Sheet Metal Work (13); Shirt-making (36); Shoe and Slipper-making (26) and Wireless Manufacture (77).[63]

Boys, too, entered a myriad of different occupations including Office Work (872); Warehouse Work (754); Messenger Work (695); Fitting in the Engineering Trades (331), and Electrical Work in the Engineering Trades (223). Others became Shop Assistants (217), Packers (193), Van Boys (141), Grocers' Assistants (140), Page Boys (85), Painters and Decorators (81), Cabinet-makers (81), Woodworking Machinists(80), and Butchers' Assistants (79). A number, too, entered occupations which remain totally hidden from the census tables, such as Bottle Washing (18), Cafe Work (10), French Polishing (17), Glove-making (13), Umbrella-making (20), Upholstering (54) and Waterproof Garment-making (34).[64]

It will be evident from the above lists that certain types of work attracted boys and girls in roughly equal numbers. 'Office Work' is a case in point. In 1932-3, 'Office Work' attracted only slightly fewer boys than girls (682 boys as against 753 girls were placed into 'Office Work' by the local J.E.B. in that year);[65] and again only slightly fewer boys

63. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1935, p.8.
64. ibid.
65. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1933, p.13.

in 1935-6 (931 boys as against 1,058 girls).[66] In 1932-3 boys and girls were found jobs as 'Shop Assistants' in about equal numbers (236 boys were found jobs as 'Shop Assistants' as against 285 girls), and a large number of girls as well as boys entered the distributive trades.[67] The local J.E.B.s, for instance, found 124 girls jobs as 'Messengers' in 1932-3 (as against 478 boys)[68] and over 1,000 girls in the city were Transport and Communication Workers (772 of these were 'Messengers') in 1931.[69] Such so-called 'blind-alley' employment was felt to be a 'problem' primarily among boys in this period. But, as we can see, significant numbers of girls entered such work.

Jerry White has recently argued that there were 'quite distinct labour markets for boys and girls' in London in this period.[70] But this seems less true in the case of inter-war Manchester. A pamphlet outlining the major occupations open to local school leavers in 1936, for instance, pointed out that Cardboard Box-making was '(a) light, clean and non-dangerous occupation for boys and girls', both male and female 'learners' in this occupation being recruited at 14.[71] In the

66. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1936, p.15.
67. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1933, p.13.
68. ibid.
69. See Table 4, Appendix; Census 1931, op.cit.
70. J.White, op.cit., p.163.
71. M.E.C., J.E.B., A Summary of Occupations open to boys and girls in the city, (M.E.C., J.E.B., S.O.), Manchester 1936, p.3.

Printing and Bookbinding trade it was stated that:

> Boys and girls usually start as messengers and after a short period on this class of work are taken into the works where they learn one of the various branches of the trade. 72.

And those of either sex who wished to enter office work at Manchester Coporation's Offices were elected via a 'Junior Entrants' Examination'. The only requirement for sitting this examination was that candidates were aged between 14 and 17.[73]

It is quite clear, then, that large numbers of boys and girls were employed in office work, shop work, hairdressing and messenger work in this period. But though these occupations were less gender-specific than others at a surface level, gender may have come into play in the specific tasks assigned to boys and girls. This is a theme which will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 2. But it is worth making two preliminary observations here. Firstly, it needs to be pointed out that gender divisions have not been considered at all with regard to teenagers and their work roles. This is surprising given that the overwhelming majority of both sexes in the 14-20

72. id., p.15.
73. id., pp.13-14.

age-group, and not just in Manchester, spent the greater part of every week in full-time paid employment, often under the same roof, or in the same occupation. Secondly, however, it seems that in certain trades gender divisions were complicated. One important manifestation of gender divisions at work is that girls (and women) were employed on less 'skilled' tasks than boys and men. This was certainly the case in, for instance, French polishing, one of Manchester's Furniture Trades:

> More girls are now being engaged in this trade on account of the work in some branches being easily learned, but the better class of work requires a high degree of skill. Girls are often employed on the polishing of oak, but rarely polish mahogany which takes a higher polish. 74.

But in the Glove-making trade of Manchester, girls of 14 and 15 were employed on work which was considered more 'skilled' than the work undertaken by boys in this trade:

> Girls enter this trade as learners at the age of 14 or 15 years. The work is chiefly machining and some parts are fairly skilled. Boys enter as errand boys and apprenticeships are unusual. 75.

A similar situation prevailed in Laundry Work; girls were

74. id., p.11.
75. id., p.7.

employed as 'sorters' and 'folders' as well as in more 'skilled' work such as ironing, whereas boys in this occupation were employed in van delivery and collection.[76] Girls' work, then, was not necessarily less skilled work than boys' work. The reverse was the case in certain industrial occupations.

Having said this, gender divisions at work were in evidence in certain local trades. In the Baking and Confectionery trade, boys were employed on 'light labouring duties' whereas girls were employed on 'simple repetition processes'.[77] It was the same in the Boot and Shoe trade, where 'tall, strong juveniles were required to operate the machines', but women were employed on lighter tasks such as sewing and packing.[78] In addition, certain trades were boys' and men's trades (Building was the only exclusively boys' and men's trade in Manchester)[79] and certain trades were girls' and women's trades such as Machining, Millinery, Dressmaking and Embroidery.[80] That said, we should not impose a too rigid distinction between boys' and men's work and girls' and women's work. Often local trades appealed for 'juvenile' workers of either sex and, as the earlier examples illustrate, skilled work was not synonymous with boys' and men's work and unskilled work with girls' and women's.

76. id., p.13.
77. id., p.1.
78. id., pp.1-2.
79. id., pp.2-3; See also M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Reports, passim.
80. M.E.C., J.E.B., S.O., pp.4, 6, 7.

The demand for juvenile labour in the city during this period was an insatiable one. This was the case even in the worst years of the Depression. 'A year or two ago there were more jobs than boys and girls to fill them', pointed out an official at the headquarters J.E.B. in the city centre in 1934.[81] The J.E.B.'s statistics bear this out. Between July 1932 and June 1933, for instance, when trade throughout the city was said to be 'very poor', the J.E.B. was notified of 10,106 vacancies for 'juveniles' (which meant boys and girls aged between 14 and 18), but the number of 'placements' by the J.E.B. was only 9,339.[82] This pattern was repeated throughout the remainder of the 1930s. In 1934-5, 11,406 'placements' were made by the J.E.B. but it was notified of over 13,000 vacancies for boys and girls.[83] In 1935-6, over 12,000 'placements' were carried out by the J.E.B. but it was informed of 16,250 vacancies in all.[84] In the J.E.B.'s annual report for 1936, it was stated that local 'juveniles' enjoyed greater employment choice than at any time in the past and more local employers notified the Bureaux about vacancies than at any time in the past.[85] Between July and October of 1936, the Bureaux were informed of over 5,000 vacancies for local boys and girls.[86] In 1937, the demand for juvenile labour in the city was said

81. M.E.N., 24 July 1934.
82. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1933, pp.1, 10. These statistics and those cited below refer to the 'placements' by all the local J.E.B.s.
83. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1935, p.9.
84. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1936, p.13.
85. id., p.5.
86. ibid.

to be greater than the supply;[87] and in 1939, work for local 'juveniles' was said to be 'plentiful'.[88]

As regards specific trades, in 1934 there was 'an unsatisfied demand' for girls in the local sewing trades but also in electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, in wireless assembly and in shorthand and typing.[89] In the following year, the demand for girls in all of the above occupations 'exceeded the number of girls available' and this was also the case in the cotton industry.[90] There was a growing demand for boys in the local aircraft factories from 1936 onwards and also a growing demand for boys in the local engineering trade.[91] By 1939, juvenile workers of either sex were in heavy demand in the clothing trades, in the Retail and Wholesale distributive trades and as a result of rearmament work, in the engineering trade and in the rubber trade.[92] There were wage increases of between 2/6d and 5/- a week for 'juveniles' employed in the above trades in 1938 and employers who failed to apply these wage increases failed to attract or hold juvenile labour.[93]

87. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1938, p.1. quoted in H.E.Canner, 'The Juvenile Employment Service in Manchester, 1910-1939' unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Manchester, 1958, p.127.
88. id., p.128.
89. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1934, p.1.
90. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1935, p.6.
91. Canner, op.cit., p.138.
92. id., p.139.
93. ibid.

14-18 year olds were in particularly heavy demand locally, then, during the 1930s. In addition, school leavers entering the local labour market in the '30s were at an advantage over school leavers in many other parts of the country because there were fewer school leavers competing for the myriad of industrial jobs that a large city like Manchester could offer young people. Manchester was one of the places where the juvenile labour supply contracted most sharply in the 1930s, owing to the decline in the birth rate during the First World War, and between 1928 and 1932, the number of school leavers entering the labour market of Manchester was only three-quarters of the usual figure throughout the 1920s.[94] The contraction of the juvenile labour supply thus gave rise to an actual shortage of juvenile labour in the city during the 1930s and the flood of post-war children onto the labour market in 1934 (the products of the brief post-war baby boom) appears not to have altered the position in any way.[95] One manifestation of this was the steady increase in the number of 'juveniles' from outside the city who were found jobs in Manchester. 'In all cases where young people have been brought from other areas', the J.E.B. report of 1935-6 stated, 'it has been impossible to fill the vacancies

94. See Ministry of Labour, Memorandum on the Shortage, Surplus and Redistribution of Juvenile Labour during the Years 1928-1933 based on the views of Local Juvenile Employment Committees, Cmd. 3327, London, May 1929, p.4.
95. See M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Reports throughout the 1930s.

by the introduction of local candidates'.[96] Few 'juveniles' from other districts appear to have been placed in employment locally during the 1920s, (a South Wales boy was found a job with a local engineering firm in 1925);[97] but an increasing number were being placed into employment locally by the 1930s: 262 in 1932-3, 510 in 1933-4, 466 in 1934-5 and 513 in 1935-6.[98] In the latter year, 'juveniles' were placed in employment locally from as far afield as Jarrow, South Shields, Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland.[99] Others arrived in Manchester from Southport, West Hartlepool, Wrexham, Caernarvon and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.[100] Many other 'juveniles' from places on the outskirts of Manchester such as Altrincham, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Glossop were found jobs in the city by the local J.E.B. in the 1930s.[101]

The juvenile labour shortage in the city in the 1930s did not mean, of course, that there was no juvenile unemployment. But official statistics on this are difficult to interpret and tell us precious little about the extent of the 'problem'.[102] In W.R.Garside's view, juvenile unemployment throughout this period was 'an economic and social problem of alarming proportions' and from 1929 onwards:

96. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1936, p.16.
97. Canner, op.cit., p.141.
98. See M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1933, p.10; id., Annual Report 1934, p.9; id., Annual Report 1935, p.9; id., Annual Report 1936, p.13.
99. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1936, p.16.
100. ibid.
101. ibid.
102. See above pp 16-17. See also Chapter 3 of this thesis.

> when the supply of young workers was falling off... juvenile unemployment began, like adult unemployment, to grow at an appreciable rate as industry's capacity to absorb even a reduced number of workers noticeably weakened.103.

The evidence presented above on Manchester does not appear to support Garside's interpretation. In Manchester, as we have said, there was an actual shortage of juvenile labour throughout the 1930s.

The extent of juvenile unemployment locally in this period will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3. But when the economist John Jewkes examined the extent of juvenile unemployment throughout the whole of Lancashire in 1932, he found that there were considerable regional variations in its incidence. Unemployment among 'insured' juveniles in the Manchester district, which included Levenshulme, Manchester, Denton, Openshaw, Newton Heath and Reddish, was only 5% in June 1932, the lowest rate in the entire county after Lancaster where the figure was 4%.[104] In Trafford Park, Eccles, Salford and Altrincham the unemployment rate among 'insured' juveniles was also low in June 1932; about 7%.[105] This compared very favourably with the juvenile unemployment situation in some

103.W.R.Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy', op.cit., pp.322,331.
104.Jewkes and Winterbottom, op.cit., p.142.
105.ibid.

areas of Lancashire. In the Atherton district, which included Wigan, 16% of 'insured' juveniles were unemployed in June 1932; in the Stalybridge district,which included Stockport and Ashton-under-Lyne, 15% were; in the Oldham district 14% of 'insured' juveniles were unemployed in June 1932; in the St.Helens district, which included Warrington and Widnes, 13% were; in Chorley and Preston 12% were; 12% of 'insured' juveniles were also unemployed in the Rochdale district, which included Bury, in June 1932; 11% in the Bolton district; 11% in Blackburn and 9% in Burnley, Nelson and Colne.[106]

Manchester was above all a magnet for unemployed 'juveniles' in these areas. It drew in increasing numbers of young workers from the surrounding districts throughout the Depression years, as we have seen. In contrast, the number of Manchester 'juveniles' who were found jobs outside the city by the local J.E.B. was infinitesimal; a mere 80 out of 9,339 'placements' in 1932-3; only 175 out of 11,406 'placements' in 1934-5 and only 147 out of 12,366 'placements' locally in 1935-6.[107]

Chapter 3 will consider youth unemployment in the city at this period in more detail and will look, much more

106.ibid.
107.M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1933, p.10; id., Annual Report 1935, p.9; id., Annual Report 1936, p.13.

than recent historians have done, at the length of time 14-18 year olds could expect to be unemployed. The following statistics give some indication though of the nature of the 'problem' in Manchester. According to a Ministry of Labour Survey in August 1925, only 3% of all the boys in the city and only 4% of all the girls were unemployed in that month;[108] only 5% of all boys and only 5% of all girls were unemployed in the same month the following year.[109] Using the Live Register figures to probe back even further, Jewkes and Winterbottom found that only 4.6% of 'insured' 14-18 year olds in the Manchester district were unemployed in June 1923, only 1.8% were in June 1927 and in June 1932, ie. in the depths of the Depression, only 5% were.[110] These figures are not entirely reliable since they ignore unemployment among 14 and 15 year olds (according to the Ministry of Labour, this amounted to 'about one-third' of the insured figure in 1932);[111] but the above figures do suggest that the Depression had little,if any,effect on the number of 14-18 year olds who experienced unemployment in Manchester. We have argued above that favourable demographic factors were partly responsible for the buoyant and healthy state of the juvenile labour

108. Ministry of Labour, Report of the Committee on Education and Industry (England and Wales), First Part, London 1926, Appendix VI, p.110.
109. ibid.
110. Jewkes and Winterbottom, op.cit., p.142. The 'Live Register' was kept by the J.E.B.s. It comprised all the 14-17 year olds who had applied for employment at the Bureaux and by receiving their application for work at regular intervals had kept their names 'alive'. See W.R.Garside,'Juvenile Unemployment Statistics between the Wars: A Commentary and Guide to Sources', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, No.33, Autumn 1976, pp.38-46 (44).
111. Ministry of Labour, Report For The Year 1932, March 1933, Cmd.4281, London 1933, p.43.

market in the city in the worst years of the Depression.

A Ministry of Labour memorandum, issued in 1929, outlined how a number of Juvenile Employment Committees throughout the country welcomed the anticipated juvenile labour shortage in their areas on the grounds that it would allow young people greater choice over the types of jobs they entered:

> A number of Committees frankly welcome the anticipated shortage in their localities, and comment on the enhanced opportunities, which will be open to the smaller number of juveniles available, to select employment according to their desires. 112.

It was assumed that this would mean:

> Boys and girls now prepared to take non-progressive employment will turn more and more to skilled industry as trade revives.113.

Whether the Ministry's predictions were borne out in the case of working-class boys and girls entering the labour market of

112.Ministry of Labour, Juvenile Labour, op.cit., p.6.
113.ibid.

Manchester in the 1930s will become clearer in the remainder of this chapter. But ,before we examine this question, it is as well to say something about the so-called 'transition' from school to wage-earning work in this period.

The 'transition' from school to wage-earning work allegedly occurred at the age of 14 for working-class children in this period:

> I started in the mill in 1930 when I was fourteen...

declared one of Elizabeth Roberts's Preston women:

> The way they used to think then, you had to earn your keep, it wasn't a question of going to learn something where you didn't get a wage for four years, you had to start when you turned fourteen to earn money.114.

The 'transition' period in question would seem to have been a fairly abrupt one in the above case, which is just how the middle-class writer Joan L.Harley imagined it for Manchester's working-class girls in the same period:

114.Cited in E.Roberts, op.cit., p.38.

> The girl who is able to stay at school until she is at least sixteen...

Harley argued,

> has a better chance of making a happy transition from childhood to adult life than the girl who leaves school at fourteen, since most of her time is planned for her.115.

Harley, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, believed that 14 year old girls were open to all kinds of dangers once 'the influence and direction of the school are suddenly withdrawn'. M.E.C. evidently shared this view. It drew attention in 1928 to the difficult transition from school to wage-earning work for children of either sex:

> The school leaving age is a difficult one for children who have up to that time received much careful and kindly supervision. The school leaver is thrown into the midst of many new and strange experiences which must be faced without a friendly teacher at hand to advise and help.116

But how far do these images of an abrupt transition reflect the reality of wage-earning within the working-class ? Elizabeth Roberts argues that in the case of working-class girls:

115.Harley, op.cit., p.3.
116.City of Manchester, The Signpost: A Guide For Young People and Their Elders, Manchester 1928, p.6.

> The period between the ages of about fourteen and twenty-five was distinctive for most girls, bridging as it did childhood and independent adulthood. More women worked for wages during this period than at any other time of their lives.117.

It is nevertheless a fact that wage-earning work, even in this period, was undertaken by large numbers of girls and boys long before the age of 14 and certainly did not always coincide with the end of schooling as Joan L.Harley, Manchester Education Committee and Elizabeth Roberts seem to imply. In Preston, for instance, one of the three Lancashire towns Elizabeth Roberts's research relates to, 29% of all 12 and 13 year old girls and 15% of all 12 and 13 year old boys were in full-time paid employment in 1921.[118] In Blackburn, Bolton, Burnley, Oldham and Rochdale, the percentage of 12 and 13 year olds in full-time paid work was even higher. In Rochdale, where a higher percentage of 12 and 13 year olds were in work than in any other Lancashire town or city with a population of over 50,000 in 1921, 45% of all 12 and 13 year old girls and 47% of all 12 and 13 year old boys were in full-time paid employment in that year.[119]

These statistics reveal, if anything, that Elizabeth Roberts's emphasis on the domestic unpaid tasks undertaken by

117.E.Roberts, op.cit., p.39.
118.See Census 1921, op.cit., Table 18.
119.ibid.

'children' under 14 in this period is misplaced since a sizeable proportion were already at work by the age of 14. They also reveal, however, that she exaggerates the effectiveness of the 1918 Education Act in eliminating child employment by declaring:

> In 1918 all exceptions and exemptions ended and compulsory full-time education to the age of fourteen was imposed.120

The figures for 1921 (drawn from the Census of that year), would seem to indicate that a sizeable proportion of 12 and 13 year olds throughout Lancashire as a whole simply fell through the supposed safety net provided by the 1918 Education Act.

In discussing the number of young people under 14 in paid employment, we are not simply discussing the number in full-time paid employment. We are also focusing on those who were employed part-time for wages. The true extent of this form of paid employment is, of course, not known. The Census ignores part-time paid employment altogether, but an investigation by Salford Education Committee into the number of children working for wages outside school hours in that

120. Roberts, op.cit., p.34. On the raising of the minimum school-leaving age to 14 under the Education Act of 1918, see Education Act, 1918, 8 and 9 George 5 Chapter 39, Section 8(1) cited in The Public General Acts 8 and 9, Geo.V, London 1918, p.128.

city in 1913 arrived at a figure of 2,363 children; 590 of these, it was discovered, worked between 20 and 40 hours a week and a further 52 worked over 40 hours a week.[121]

A similar investigation was undertaken by M.E.C. in 1915. This investigation discovered that 6,081 children attending day schools in the city (4,519 boys and 1,562 girls) were employed outside school hours for wages.[122] The majority of these were employed either on errand work, in shops, or delivering newspapers or milk.[123] The Education Act which was passed in 1918 allowed L.E.A.s to establish bye-laws in order to 'regulate' the number of schoolchildren who were employed for wages outside school hours. M.E.C. did not exercise this right before 1920 but bye-law legislation passed in that year led, after 1920, to a situation in which:

> In no case can a child under twelve years be employed, whilst the maximum number of hours children between twelve and fourteen can be employed in any one week is seventeen. 124

121.J.Hallsworth, op.cit., pp.113-114.
122.ibid.
123.id., p.115. See also Springhall, Coming of Age, op.cit., Chapter 3 for a discussion of part-time paid employment in the major cities before 1914.
124.The Signpost, op.cit., p.6.

Thus many 12-14 year olds locally were working not insignificant working weeks for wages as late as 1920. In fact, despite bye-law legislation, referred to above, there were still over 6,000 Manchester schoolchildren working between 20 and 40 hours a week for wages in 1922.[125] And, according to Spurley Hey, Manchester's Director of Education, the figure was still around 2,000 in 1928.[126]

Obviously, no official investigation could ever hope to ascertain the true extent of child employment. The above investigations do indicate, however, that the number of children engaged in paid work remained at a high level in the city throughout the 1920s. As Robert Roberts remarked:

> Well before they left school, most boys from the undermass had been working part-time in shops or as street traders of some sort. At that time railways held a glamour for the young that has long since faded. Round all the city termini 'station boys' gathered in great numbers daily both to watch all the bustle and excitement and earn coppers by doing odd jobs... In our city, like the rest, errand boys, telegraph boys, van boys swarmed like summer flies.127

He was describing the early employment experiences of boys in Salford in the period between about 1910 and 1925; but the

125.Canner, op.cit., p. 7.
126.Spurley Hey, The School Leaving Age, Manchester 1928, p.32 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.7.
127.R.Roberts, The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century, Middlesex repr.1983, pp.157-158.

following evidence relates to Manchester. Joseph Farrington grew up in West Gorton during the Depression and as a child he sold newspapers to supplement the family income:

> I wasn't supposed to sell. I didn't have a permit. I was too young. There'd been a law passed. But I used to go round with papers to help my dad out (his father, an iron moulder at Metropolitan Vickers in Trafford Park, was made redundant in 1928). I used to get fourpence a dozen for the penny papers and sixpence halfpenny a dozen for the Sunday Chrons and Empires on a Saturday night. I used to sell programmes at the football matches at Maine Road and Belle Vue... I used to get nearly as much as my dad sometimes (his father lived off Public Assistance). Of course it was supposed to be unknown to the authorities...128

We can see, then, that the whole notion of an abrupt 'transition' from school to wage-earning work, which middle-class investigators believed working-class children experienced at about the age of 14, is somewhat mythical. It certainly ignores the fact that many working-class children were already in full-time employment by the age of 12 in 1921 and a number of others might as well have been judging by the number of hours they worked. It must be said that the number of 12 and 13 year olds in full-time employment in Manchester in 1921 appears to have been small; only 50 boys and 30 girls out of nearly 29,000 in the age-group according to the Census.[129] But this obviously overlooks the amount of 'part-time' paid employment undertaken

128. Quoted in N.Gray, The Worst of Times, An Oral History of the Great Depression in Britain, London 1985, pp.14-15.
129. Census of 1921, op.cit., Table 18.

by the under 14s and how far it reflects the true figure of 12 and 13 year olds in full-time paid employment is impossible to say.

Despite the fact that paid work was often undertaken long before the age of 14, academic commentators at the time were most alarmed about the job choices of working-class school leavers in the 'unknown years' between 14 and 16. The authors of a 1928 study of boy labour in Liverpool, for instance, declared:

> In the critical years between 14 and 16, accurate information concerning the boy is of the scantiest, in spite of the profound changes (often for the worse) that take place therein. 130

Contemporaries were, of course, primarily interested in the job choices of working-class boys and particularly in their peculiar susceptibility to 'blind-alley' work. They were less interested in the job choices of working-class girls; the authors of the Merseyside Survey, for instance, were dismissive about the job choices of working-class girls in Liverpool in the early '30s:

130.Griffith and Joseph, op.cit., p.112.

> This division into 'progressive' and 'blind-alley' jobs is less satisfactory when applied to girls. Most of the work performed by the female adolescent is purely mechanical and repetitive in character... most women indeed do not wish to remain at work after they get married.131.

One of the Jewkes studies showed how 32.2% of all boys who left elementary schools in the Manchester district in July 1932 and 17.4% of all the girls entered 'Retail and Wholesale Trading',[132] a quintessential 'blind-alley' occupation according to Jewkes, which exposed 14-18 year old boys to periods of 'sporadic employment', 'interrupted training', and 'weary and deadening idleness'.[133] The most critical period for boys employed in 'blind-alley' occupations (Jewkes, too, was less concerned about girls), occurred at about the age of 16 when employers were likely to sack boys rather than begin paying unemployment and health insurance contributions, as they were obliged to do for all the members of the workforce who were over 16.[134] Jewkes produced no statistics to support this argument, however, and the extent to which the break at 16 was enforced as opposed to 16 year olds leaving 'blind-alley' occupations to take up apprenticeships is unclear.[135]

131. Caradog Jones (ed.), op.cit., p.206.
132. Jewkes and Winterbottom, op.cit., pp.146-7.
133. id., p.14.
134. ibid.
135. See the conflicting conclusions of Griffith and Joseph on Liverpool, op.cit., and a Birmingham Juvenile Employment Officer's inquiry, outlined in S.S.R., Volume X, No.9, September 1929, pp.175-178.

There is, though, some evidence to suggest that the latter course was becoming an established practice by this period. In Liverpool, for instance, a number of errand boys who wanted to become tradesmen were 'taking steps to achieve their objective' in 1934.[136] In pointing to the movement from 'unskilled' jobs into 'skilled' jobs among boys in Liverpool (or,as the Merseyside authors put it, the movement from 'Blind-Alley employment' into 'Progressive employment'), the authors of the Merseyside Survey were essentially undermining the alarmist views of Jewkes and his colleagues in Manchester. 'The figures do not indicate', the Merseyside authors argued:

> that even boys who get into blind-alley occupations, if - as is often stated - they are dismissed at 16 or thereabouts, remain long without work. In fact, the big jump in the number 'in progressive employment' at 18 or 21 rather suggests that they succeed in finding steady work.137

This might have been the case in Liverpool but how far was it also the case in Manchester ?

136. Caradog Jones (ed.), op.cit., p.221. On the shift from 'unskilled' work to 'skilled' apprenticeships at 16 among boy labourers in Cambridge before the First World War, see M.N.Keynes, The Problem of Boy Labour in Cambridge, Cambridge 1911, p.8. On the same trend in Oxford before 1914, see C.V. Butler, Social Conditions in Oxford, Oxford 1912, pp.52-60. Some of the errand boys in pre-war Oxford were the sons of artisans who wanted their sons to 'look around' before entering an apprenticeship. See also Springhall, Coming of Age, op.cit., pp.85, 100-102.

137. Caradog Jones (ed.), op.cit., p.206.

It is difficult to say given the absence of any 'Adolescent Enquiry' of the kind undertaken in Liverpool; but the boy labour market in Manchester was unlikely to have been any different. The number of 'Messengers and Porters' over the age of 16 in Manchester was miniscule compared with the number under 16 both in 1921 and in 1931.[138] It is unclear from the census data where the majority of this group went to after they had reached the age of 16. No doubt many were promoted. But a number who were employed in so-called 'blind-alley' jobs (such as 'Messengers and Porters') probably took up 'skilled' apprenticeships. To take one possible indication of this, there were twice as many 16 and 17 year old apprentice fitters in the city both in 1921 and in 1931 than there were 14 and 15 year old apprentice fitters.[139] A Ministry of Labour Report on Apprenticeship Training in 1925 pointed out that the traditional seven-year apprenticeship (where boys entered the trade at 14) had been 'superseded to a very considerable extent by an apprenticeship for five years from the age of 16

138. In 1921, of the 3,620 'Messengers and Porters' under 20, 2,668 were under 16, only 787 were aged 16 and 17 and only 150 were aged 18 and 19. In 1931, the numbers in the respective age-groups were: 2,826 aged 14 and 15, 1,257 aged 16 and 17 and only 343 aged 18-20. See Census of 1921, op.cit., Table 18; Census of 1931, op.cit., Table 18.

139. There were 318 14 and 15 year old apprentice fitters enumerated under 'Metal Workers' in 1921 and 716 16 and 17 year olds. At the Census of 1931, the number in each of these age-groups was 290 and 641 respectively. See Census of 1921, op.cit., Table 18; Census of 1931, op.cit., Table 18.

years'.[140] This was the case in all of the 'Principal Industries' but especially in those which formed the backbone of Manchester's economy. In the Engineering Industry, for instance, 48% of all boy apprentices served a 5-year apprenticeship in 1925 and only 26% served a 7-year apprenticeship; in Precious Metals, the corresponding figures were 44% as against 24%; in the Chemical Industry, 78% as against 11%; in Electrical Contracting, 70% as against 8%; in the Furniture Trades, 50% as against 20%; in Leather and Leather Goods, 55% as against 7% and in the Distributive Trades, 26% as against 5%. The evidence produced in the above Report also showed that boys entered apprenticeships at 17 and even at 18.[141]

There is ample evidence, then, that apprenticeships were being increasingly deferred in this period in favour of 'semi-skilled' or 'unskilled' work which was invariably more highly paid.

It is in some ways misleading to refer to such work simply as 'dead-end' or 'blind-alley' work, as contemporaries did, because they were primarily concerned with the lack of training such work offered. They were much less prepared to admit that such work held certain attractions over lengthy

140. Ministry of Labour, Report of an Enquiry into Apprenticeship and Training for the Skilled Occupations in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1925-6, Volume VII, General Report, London 1928, p.4.
141. id., pp.4, 81.

periods of training on low pay. Ernest S.Griffith and R.A. Joseph from the University Settlement in Liverpool, for example, provided an incredibly bleak account of the life of 'Messengers and van lads' who were said to be:

> in such a precarious position industrially as to make them wonder (if they think at all) whether the world has a use for them. 142

The above authors, as indicated earlier in this chapter, were primarily concerned with establishing 'the extent to which a boy is an industrial nomad' as seemed to be implied in the high turnover of jobs among the boys in their study. All of the boys in this study were aged 16½ but 215 boys had had 425 jobs between them since leaving elementary schools in Liverpool two and a half years earlier in June 1924.[143] According to the authors, these figures were 'an understatement of the real position' and the total number of jobs held by these 215 boys was more, 'in the neighbourhood of 482'; which meant that the average length of time they were in a job 'would appear to be not over nine months'.[144] Officials at the J.E.B. in Manchester were just as concerned about the frequency of job changes not only among boys but

142.Griffith and Joseph, op.cit., p.113.
143.id., pp.112,114.
144.ibid.

also among girls. An inquiry into the early employment experiences of all the boys and girls who registered for unemployment benefit at the local J.E.B. in April 1929 revealed how one boy had had 13 jobs since leaving school and one girl had had 12 jobs.[145] There were 240 boys in the sample and two-thirds of these had had two or more jobs and over 50% had had three or more jobs. Out of the 147 girls in the sample, only 35 had had fewer than 2 jobs and, as with the boys, over 50% had had three or more jobs.[146] One of the officials involved in the placement work of the local J.E.B. remarked that:

> One of the greatest difficulties of the Bureau was to persuade juveniles to stay in their employment long enough to understand their work.

This official always tried:

> to obtain a promise from every juvenile

for whom she attempted to find work that he or she would remain in the occupation for three months.[147] It appears that her advice was not always heeded because, in 1938, on average, 210 14 and 15 year olds each week changed their jobs through the J.E.B.[148]

145.Quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.136.
146.ibid.
147.id., p.139.
148.ibid.

Joan L.Harley's study of 169 local girls in 1937, 141 of whom had left local elementary schools at the age of 14, allows an even deeper insight into the occupational mobility of local working-class girls in the 1930s.[149] All of the girls in the sample were under 19 and the majority were either 16 or 17. But over half the girls in the sample (56%) had had two or more jobs since leaving school; about a quarter (23%) had had three or more jobs; 8% had had four or more jobs and 1% had had between six and eight jobs.[150] Although only about half of the sample (53%) gave their reasons for leaving their previous job, 38% did so because there was 'no prospect of promotion'; 23% because they disliked the work; 21% because they had been put on short time; only 5% because they had been dismissed and the remainder because of long hours (5%), poor health (5%) or because their jobs had been temporary (5%).[151] 'The greatest number of girls', Harley concluded, 'left their jobs because they found better ones'. Some of the girls went to learn a trade, others left to earn more money, work shorter hours and travel shorter distances to work.[152]

149.Harley, op.cit., Chapter V.
150.id., p.43.
151.ibid.
152.id., p.44.

The girls in Harley's sample were as representative a sample of Manchester working-class girls as the author could find, but probably not entirely representative since 28 central school girls were also included in the sample which tended to inflate the numbers who were employed in office work.[153] The job changes of the girls in the sample did not always meet with the approval of the author who assumed, quite incorrectly, that the aim of all working-class girls was to move into more 'skilled' work and to improve themselves.[154] Clearly this was not the case since:

> a tailor's learner would like to give up her trade to be a despatcher, which is a descent from a skilled to an unskilled occupation. 155

Also, none of the girls in 'Group 2' and 'Group 3' occupations (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual jobs) expressed any desire to become 'foreladies'.[156] Despite these problem cases, however, a number of the girls in her sample were preparing to move from 'unskilled' work into 'skilled' work: a packer (a 'Group 3' occupation) was looking for a job as a shop assistant (a 'Group 2') occupation); 3 domestic servants ('Group 3') were looking for jobs as nurses ('Group 1') and a shirt and pyjama machinist ('Group 2') was looking

153. id., pp.29, 39, 42.
154. id., pp.45, 53, 54.
155. id., p.54.
156. ibid. The author put this down to the fact that 'these girls are fairly new to factory life and have perhaps not yet had time to develop such ambitions'.

for office work ('Group 1').[157]

The most meaningful evidence available on the job choices of teenage wage-earners in inter-war Manchester, (which mainly relates to the 1930s) suggests, then, a high degree of occupational mobility among boys (especially up to about the age of 16) and, more surprisingly, a high degree of occupational mobility among girls. The evidence relating to boys is supported by a number of contemporary studies but especially those which were undertaken into the boy labour market of inter-war Liverpool; a city which was roughly the same size as Manchester and which, like Manchester, offered a range of occupations for young people. The juvenile labour markets Jewkes and his colleagues studied in this period, however, differed in many respects from the juvenile labour markets of Liverpool and Manchester. In small Lancashire towns which were either entirely dependent or largely dependent on a single, declining, industry, there was a limited number of alternatives open to juveniles who were either sacked at 16 or put onto short-time. This led in certain cases (Barrow-in-Furness, Burnley and St.Helens are the most notorious examples) to high levels of juvenile unemployment which outlasted the Depression in the Cotton Industry in Burnley and persisted into 1936 in

157. id. pp.41, 48, 49, 51.

St.Helens.[158]

The very reverse was the case, however, in Manchester where the demand for juvenile labour became so insatiable in the 1930s that juvenile labour had to be imported from the surrounding districts. The limited evidence available suggests that the above conditions provided a greater degree of job choice for working-class girls and working-class boys in the city during the 1930s which, according to officials at the local J.E.B., led many to 'experiment' with different jobs.[159]

In stressing the frequency of job changes among teenage wage-earners in Manchester at this period, we are in some ways offering a different interpretation of their job choices than is suggested by the work of Diana Gittins and Elizabeth Roberts.[160] Both of the above writers stress the overriding influence of parents on the job 'choices' of their children. All Diana Gittins's interviews with working-class women revealed that:

158. See Jewkes and Jewkes, op.cit., pp.59-63. The unemployment rate among the 550 boys and girls in the Jewkes' St.Helens sample never fell below 30% between April and December 1934 and even by 1936 it had not fallen below 17%. On a personal level, this meant that 200 young people in the Jewkes' sample experienced unemployment at some time over the two-year period of the inquiry. One fifth of these were unemployed for over 11 months during this two-year period and 32 had had no employment at all in the whole of the two years.

159. Canner, op.cit., p.138. Canner wrote disapprovingly: 'It was considered that the shortage of juvenile workers encouraged some to 'experiment' in different jobs rather than change employment in a serious attempt at improvement'.

160. D.Gittins, op.cit., Chapter 3 ; E.Roberts, op.cit., Chapter 2.

> it was entirely the parents' decision as to whether their daughters should work, and what sort of work they should do. 161

Elizabeth Roberts, too, lays most stress on 'young people's lack of choice about the sort of work they did'.[162] 'Choice of work', Roberts argues:

> was very much influenced by parental advice, example, or 'string-pulling', so that once they were working they frequently found themselves either directly under a relative, or someone well known to the family. 163

Roberts, however, was only describing the situation which prevailed in the small, single industry towns of Lancaster, Preston and Barrow. Similarly, Gittins was basing her conclusions on oral evidence from textile towns like Burnley. Although the job choices of Manchester's teenage wage-earners appear to have been much less circumscribed, there is some evidence to suggest that parents were initially a guiding influence.

Geoffrey Kershaw began work as an apprentice for Hans Renold of Burnage (a firm which made bicycle chains) in 1918, apparently against his father's wishes. (His father, a brass finisher in West Manchester, had wanted him to stay on at school). Nevertheless, his father did exercise a certain

161.Gittins, op.cit., pp.69-71.
162.Roberts, op.cit., p.45.
163.ibid.

influence over his son's choice of employment since Mr. Kershaw was told: 'I must not go to a place that started at 6 o'clock in the morning'.[164] As an apprentice at Hans Renold, he began work at eight o'clock.

Another man who served an apprenticeship at the British Westinghouse engineering firm in Trafford Park immediately after the First World War pointed out:

> it was every father's ambition to get the sons to be an apprentice... Everybody wanted to be an apprentice, and there was plenty of work, nobody was unemployed, every boy got a job of some kind, but they all, all the parents wanted them to be an apprentice. 165

This man also went on to point out, however, that some of his friends who began as apprentices soon left:

> Oh yes and some used to... start as a tea boy, an apprentice, and they didn't like what they was doing and then they got a job in something or other, a lot of my friends went out... 166

Some apprentices who left were clearly influenced by the wishes of parents. The correspondence of Manchester Packing

164. Oral History Interview, Tape 250, Manchester Studies, Oral History Archive (M.S.O.H.A.), Manchester Polytechnic.
165. M.S.O.H.A., Tape 780.
166. ibid.

Case Firms provides written evidence of this. Lloyd's Packing Warehouses Ltd., in Knott Mill, for instance, informed Manchester, Salford and Bolton Case Makers' Society in January 1917 that:

> Robert Clarkson, who commenced work with us as an apprentice on January 8, only worked two days, the excuse being that his parents considered the trade too dirty. 167

One month earlier, an apprentice who had worked at the above firm 11 months had left due to his father 'taking him away'[168] and the previous month (November 1916) another apprentice had left 'on account of his parents refusing to allow him to stay in the trade'.[169] We should not, then, underestimate the influence parents could have on the job 'choices' of their children. But neither should we overestimate it. A 14 year old boy's entry into full-time work could just as easily be seen as a process of bargaining both with his parents and also, more surprisingly, with employers:

> When I was about 14 I went to town and there was seven of us waiting for this job... I was last, 'Come in. Are you strong?' I said 'Yes', 'Well I want you to walk down Piccadilly with a sandwich board... I said, 'How much will you pay me?' He said 'Ten bob a week'. I said 'No thank you'. 170

167. Letters From Packing Case Firms About Apprentices, 1913-1939, M.C.R.L., Archives Department, M308/4/3-8.
168. ibid.
169. ibid.
170. The testimony of Joseph Farrington who grew up in West Gorton during the Depression, quoted in N.Gray, op.cit., p.25.

The above example of a working-class youngster displaying a considerable degree of autonomy in the work sphere is certainly not exceptional for this period. One official at a J.E.B. in a London suburb described how boys 'mainly of the factory type' were unwilling to venture out of the town for work and others demanded certain preconditions such as short hours, good pay and good working conditions before they would accept employment that was deemed 'suitable' by the officials at the J.E.B.[171] The whole notion of 'suitable' employment, which underpinned the work of the J.E.B.s throughout the country, was highly ambiguous. The officials had their own views about what was 'suitable' employment; but this did not necessarily tally with what employers considered 'suitable' work for youngsters and, most importantly, what young people themselves felt was 'suitable' work.[172]

Officials at the J.E.B. in Manchester constantly drew attention to the fact that local youngsters decided for themselves what was 'suitable' work. In October 1918, an enquiry into unemployment among local boys ascertained that many boys were unemployed not through lack of work but because they demanded a particular job with a specific firm.[173] One

171. See the article, 'A Day in a Juvenile Employment Officer's Life', H.F., Volume XI, No.3, March 1937, pp.106-110 (106-109).
172. See the article, 'Impressions and Animadversions By a Juvenile Bureaucrat', H.F., Volume X, No.5, May 1936.
173. Canner, op.cit., p.47.

15 year old boy who had worked for two years in a cotton manufacturer's warehouse had left his job to work for a local engineering firm and 'persisted in waiting for a vacancy'. Another boy of 15 wanted a job in the electrical engineering industry:

> He was sent to 13 different firms including 5 engaged in electrical engineering. In three cases he did not attend for an interview, in another he was engaged but failed to commence, whilst in another case he would not accept the work offered. 174

The conditions which allowed local working-class lads such choice over the employment they entered were not unique to the war period. As we have seen, boys and girls were in heavy demand during the 1930s and this allowed many a greater degree of job choice in these years, too.

It seems surprising, therefore, that in discussing the job 'choices' open to working-class young people in the inter-war period, historians have been most concerned to stress the restrictions on job choice. From one direction came parental or family pressures on children to earn 'the biggest shilling'; from another, employer discrimination and the allegedly stricter demands of the labour market at this period.[175] There were also

174. id., p.48.
175. J.White, op.cit., p.163.

hereditary factors to be taken into account such as the unenviable labour market position of the 'children of the unskilled'[176] and also physical factors:

> It was still the undersized or ugly or slow-thinking youth who found himself unemployed most frequently and for longest,

argues Jerry White in his recent study of the labour market of inter-war Islington.[177]

There are elements of truth in this highly circumscribed picture but it overlooks a great deal and is overdrawn. Take the labour market position of the 'children of the unskilled', for instance. Jerry White argues that this group were fundamentally disadvantaged in terms of the job opportunities open to them. But E.L.Lewis, in his 1924 study, The Children of the Unskilled: An Economic and Social Study, was unable to prove that apprentices (or 'skilled' workers) only emerged from 'skilled' families and hardly, if at all, from 'semi-skilled' or 'unskilled' families. The author claimed that:

176. ibid.
177. id., p.164.

> Children belonging to the families in the first class('skilled families') are usually taught the value of skilled industry, habits of self-control and perseverance, and are encouraged... to enter skilled work. 178

'Skilled' parents, he argued, were more 'progressive' in this respect than 'semi-skilled' or 'unskilled' parents:

> Children belonging to the other two classes ('semi-skilled' and 'unskilled' families) have little encouragement from their parents... to enter skilled work. 179

The author's own statistics showed, however, that among 46 families in the 'first class' (skilled) there were altogether 97 apprentices and among 254 families in the 'second class' (semi-skilled) there were 216 apprentices; that is to say, there was no direct correlation to support his hypothesis.[180] The author's principal conclusion was, therefore, both vague and unspectacular:

> The families in the soundest economic position were, as a rule, able to apprentice a greater number of children than those in poorer circumstances. 181

178. E.L.Lewis, The Children of the Unskilled: An Economic and Social Study, London 1924, p.xii. Lewis's study was based on a sample of 450 families (which included 2,000 children) in Glasgow, Middlesborough and the Welsh quarrying district of Blaenau Ffestiniog in North Wales.
179. ibid.
180. id., pp.15-16.
181. id., pp.ix-x.

There is more tb be said for the physical requirements of certain trades. The Plumbing Trade in Manchester required boys of 'a good physique' in the 1930s, 'as, in addition to heavy jobs, there is often outside work to be done in bad weather'.[182] Millinery required girls 'with artistic ability and dexterity... as neatness is most essential'.[183] Good eyesight was another essential requirement in certain trades, notably Embroidery and Hosiery Manufacture.[184] But the physical requirements of certain trades did not automatically exclude the physically handicapped. Artificial Flower Making in Manchester specifically appealed to 'young people, chiefly girls who suffer from certain physical disabilities, as they may sit at their work during the greater part of the day'.[185] Similarly, there were no fixed rules on the types of boys and girls required for Office Work. The educational requirements varied depending on the individual employer:

> Some employers prefer boys and girls from Elementary Schools at 14 years of age, whilst others prefer older boys and girls from Central and Secondary Schools. 186

All of this suggests that the job horizons of working-class boys and working-class girls in the inter-war

182.M.E.C., J.E.B., S.O., op.cit., p.3.
183.id., p.6.
184.id., pp.6-7.
185.id., p.1.
186.id., p.8.

period were probably less circumscribed than recent historians have claimed. Job choices were influenced by various pressures (familial and peer-group pressures)[187] even in Manchester and also by the requirements of employers (although these were by no means fixed and by no means automatically excluded boys and girls with, for instance, a physical defect). But this is not the whole story; not in Manchester nor, indeed, elsewhere. Whilst historians have outlined the influences which restricted the job choices of teenage wage-earners from the working-class in this period, they have ignored the wealth of contemporary evidence which drew attention to the frequency of job-changing (especially among younger teenage earners) and thus the considerable degree of autonomy shown by the teenage age-group in the 'adult' world of work. A Juvenile Employment Officer drew attention to this in March 1937. The author in question was describing a typical day in the life of a J.E.B. official in 'a large dormitory suburb of London':

> A small but sharp-looking youngster approaches the counter... 'Please Sir, can I have another card for Snow Hill ? That last job you got me was no good. No prospects, Sir. I did nothing but run errands for the others'. 'I see. But you'll always have to do that at first, you know. How long were you there ?' 'Only a day, Sir'. 'A day isn't very long to tell what a job is going to be like'.'No, but there were no prospects. The other boys said so'. Another vacancy is found for him, and he is sent off to try again. 188

187.On the latter, see R.Roberts, op.cit., p.157.
188.'A Day in a Juvenile Employment Officer's Life', H.F., Volume XI, No.3, March 1937, pp.108-9.

We must turn, finally, to perhaps the most difficult question of all: how teenage wage-earners from the working-class found jobs. In discussing this question, we are, of course, extremely restricted in the sources we can use; as will be clear from the preceding discussion. The Ministry of Labour claimed in May 1929 that:

> The work of advising boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 18 on the choice of a career, of endeavouring to obtain for them suitable vacancies, and of ensuring their welfare especially during the early months of employment, is in the hands of specially constituted Juvenile Committees. 189

But a Committee on Education and Industry, which was set up by the Ministry of Labour itself, had concluded only two years earlier that:

> ... as regards placing work, the public agencies in England and Wales as a whole do not deal with more than 20% of the situations or of the juvenile workers... and that very likely the per centage is less than 20. 190

An earlier enquiry by the Ministry of Labour into the 'personal circumstances and industrial history' of 3,331 boys and 2,701

189. Ministry of Labour, Juvenile Labour, op.cit, p.2.
190. Ministry of Labour, Committee on Education and Industry, op.cit., p.16.

girls which was conducted in June and July 1925, found that only 18% of the jobs undertaken by boys and girls in the above survey had been found by the official job-finding agencies.[191]

The Merseyside Survey (published in 1934) examined this question in rather more detail using a random sample of 266 'adolescents' from Liverpool (164 boys and 102 girls), all of whom left elementary schools in the city in February 1930 at the age of 14. This enquiry revealed that the largest number (40% of the sample) found work through their 'Own Efforts', which included jobs obtained in answer to an advertisement; only slightly fewer (34%) found work through the J.E.B.; 7% found work through 'Friends' and only 6.6% found work through 'Parents'. There were slight differences between the sexes: for instance, more girls (41%) found their first job through the J.E.B. than through their 'Own Efforts' (31%), but fewer boys did (32% as against 37%). Thereafter, however, the number who found work through their 'Own Efforts' rose appreciably in the case of both girls and boys. Half the girls in the sample obtained subsequent posts through their 'Own Efforts' and just over half (51.5%) of the boys. About a third in each sex continued to use the J.E.B. and 14% of the girls (but only 4% of the boys) found subsequent jobs through the medium of 'Friends'.[192]

191. ibid.
192. Caradog Jones (ed.), op.cit., pp.202-4, 211-12.

No similar enquiry was undertaken in Manchester during this period and in the absence of this it seems worthwhile to briefly consider the work of the local J.E.B. in finding jobs for teenage wage-earners. Here we are essentially concerned with the rate of expansion of the placement work of the local J.E.B. over the two inter-war decades. But there is also some revealing evidence available on contemporary images of the J.E.B.s which highlights why they were less successful in reaching older teenage wage-earners. This theme is not even considered in H.E.Canner's history of the local J.E.B. which is ,essentially ,an account of the administration of the J.E.B. In the following account, however, the day-to-day running of the local J.E.B. will not be considered in any detail.

Manchester's official juvenile employment service was set up in January 1914 by a Sub-Committee of M.E.C.[193] Accordingly, the service was initially administered from temporary accommodation, provided by St.Anne's School which was situated in Queen Street in the city centre. The service was administered from here, however, until March 1935 when the headquarters were transferred to a building on Deansgate, which was also in the city centre. Over the period from 1914 to 1935, M.E.C. set up subsidiary branches of the main service in Levenshulme

193.M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report, 1914-15, p.2.

(1918), Newton Heath (1918), Openshaw (1918), and Withington (1935). All of these 'Juvenile Employment Bureaux', as they were officially entitled, were administered from schools with the exception of Withington's which was administered from the local Town Hall.[194] This meant that the atmosphere at the local J.E.B.s was extremely formal. The local Bureaux certainly made no attempt to extinguish the atmosphere of the school. Indeed, it appears that the schoolroom atmosphere was deliberately cultivated judging from the following account, which was written by a Manchester Evening News correspondent who visited the city centre Bureau in 1934:

> In a backwater just off the Deansgate traffic tide in Manchester there is a quiet building which would remind you of any ordinary council school. Today I went in and walked through an upper room which had all the atmosphere of a classroom - dozens of healthy boys and girls sitting in rows of forms, facing a desk, with men and women who looked like teachers moving about. There was the schoolroom air of order and discipline. 195

The author of this report even referred to the Bureau's supervisor, E.G.Greenwell, as 'the headmaster'. The Bureau's own literature also throws light on the somewhat austere atmosphere of the local Bureaux. In the annual report for 1934, for instance, it was pointed out that:

194.id., Annual Report, 1935-6, p.9.
195.M.E.N., 24 July 1934.

> Juveniles are not encouraged to pay unnecessary calls at the Bureau after their first interview and registration. Vacancies are not filled by the selection from those juveniles who happen to be on the premises, but a careful selection from the complete registers is made, and the most suitable boy or girl summoned to attend by post card. 196

The service provided by the J.E.B.s nationally attracted criticism on a number of grounds in this period, but among the most frequently cited was the impersonal nature of the service provided.[197] One Juvenile Employment Officer, writing in May 1936, for instance, argued that school leavers would not automatically resort to the service for advice about jobs until it changed its name. The word 'Bureau', he argued, was 'an unpleasant word with unfortunate associations' and the term 'juvenile' was 'odious' and 'a positive insult to any sensitive adolescent from fifteen years upwards'.[198] In addition to having an official air about them, J.E.B.s frequently carried the stigma, especially in the depressed areas, of being popularly known as the 'Juvenile Dole' which led T.K.Cross to argue ,in October 1936 ,that the Bureaux were simply part of 'a vast and impersonal administrative machine'.[199] The local J.E.B.s were responsible for administering the unemployment insurance scheme to the under-18 age-group throughout this period and this work was conducted either in

196.M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1934, p.3.
197.See,in particular, 'Impressions and Animadversions, By a Juvenile Bureaucrat', H.F., op.cit.
198.id., pp.192-193.
199.T.K.Cross, 'Social Service or Bureaucracy - A Problem for the Juvenile Employment Departments and Bureaux', H.F., Volume X, No.10, October 1936, p.348.

the same building as the placement work of the Bureau or in an adjacent building.[200] In the light of these problems and criticisms, how did the local juvenile employment service fare in the 1920s and 1930s ?

It appears that during the war years only a minority of local school leavers bothered to register at the local J.E.B. In the 18 month period between January 1914 (when the first Bureau was opened) and July 1915, the local service placed only 1,620 local school leavers into employment, but 10,000 children each year left school during the war years.[201] By 1916, this figure had declined to 980 and only 772 local school leavers were placed into employment by the local J.E.B. in 1917.[202] There was a turnaround in the Bureau's fortunes, however, immediately after the war. Section 22 of the 1918 Education Act extended the work of the J.E.B.s. Henceforth ,they were to deal not just with 14-16 year olds but also 17 year olds. In effect, this simply meant that more secondary school leavers could now use the Bureaux. J.E.B.s were also given the responsibility for administering the 'juvenile' section of the Government's 'Out of Work Donation' scheme for civilian workers. In addition to this, the local J.E.B.s found work for a number of local 'juveniles' who had

200.See below, pp.161-166.
201.M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report, 1914-15, p.3.
202.id., Annual Report, 1916, p.8; id., Annual Report, 1917, p.17.

been discharged from war work and staff from the Bureaux gave talks to after-care workers, employers, welfare societies, student teachers and resumed their visits to local schools.[203]

Despite this work, the local J.E.B.s continued to place into employment only a minority of local teenage wage-earners during the early 1920s. In 1921, the number of local 'juveniles' placed into employment locally (which now included anyone between the ages of 14 and 18) was only 2,112.[204] It was even fewer (1,871) the following year and this figure had only risen slightly to 2,442 by 1928.[205] As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, between 9,000 and 10,000 14 year olds entered the local labour market every year in the early 1920s and there were 45,000 in the 14-18 age-group locally in 1925.[206] The Levenshulme J.E.B. was even forced to close in October 1923 owing to a lack of local support.[207]

But after 1923 the placement work of the local J.E.B.s began to increase gradually and by the end of the 1920s over three times as many local 'juveniles' were being placed into employment by the service than was the case in 1923.[208] In the late '20s and early '30s, between 8,000 and 9,000 14-18 year olds every year were being placed into employment by the local J.E.B.s. The number dealt with by the local

203. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1918-19, p.6; id., Annual Report 1920, p.8; id., Annual Report 1922, p.1.
204. Canner, op.cit., p.229.
205. ibid.
206. See M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., p.107.
207. J.E.B. weekly report, 1/10/1923 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.51
208. id., p.229.

service increased after 1934. Between 1935 and 1939, no fewer than 11,000 14-18 year olds every year were placed into employment locally by the service. In 1934, the local J.E.B. found over 10,500 boys and girls work and E.G.Greenwell, the supervisor at the city centre Bureau, said that the service was finding jobs for 300 'children' a week in July 1934. The number of local boys and girls who registered themselves for employment at the Bureau was a record-breaking 15,139 in 1934. 'This', argued the Director of Education in the city (W.O.Lester Smith) ,'is a clear indication of the greater use that is being made of the advisory and placing service of the Department'.[209]

That the placement work of the local service increased quite dramatically over the two inter-war decades is, then, indisputable. But it needs to be borne in mind that the number of local school leavers who were placed into employment by the service was far fewer than the number who registered themselves for employment;[210] too much should not be read into W.O.Lester Smith's words therefore. Also, compared with the number of 14-18 year olds in the city, the number placed into employment by the service, even in the 1930s, was no more than a minority; no more than a third, in fact.[211]

209. ibid; M.E.N., 24 July 1934; M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1934, p.1.
210. See Canner, op.cit., p.229.
211. ibid.

The reasons why the service only attracted a minority of local teenage wage-earners are probably manifold. We have suggested above that the austere, schoolroom atmosphere of the Bureaux may have deterred some from attending, certainly more than once. But another reason undoubtedly lay in the Bureaux whole approach to teenage employment. We have already mentioned the dichotomy between jobs which the J.E.B.'s officials deemed suitable for teenage wage-earners and jobs which the teenage earners themselves (and their parents) considered suitable. This dichotomy is particularly apparent in the work of the local service. During the post-war slump, for instance, the staff at the local J.E.B.s urged parents to 'prolong their child's education rather than risk a deterioration in the child's character' through allowing their children to enter casual work. But this advice appears to have been rejected by many parents.[212] In 1936, the supervisor at the city centre J.E.B. prepared a pamphlet on suitable occupations for school leavers and issued this to all local schools. This pamphlet was intended to persuade all prospective school leavers to 'give more serious attention to their choice of occupation' and to 'lessen the number who are indeterminate or even capricious about their first choice of a career'.[213] But it appears that the pamphlet did not achieve the desired effect since even by 1937, according to Canner:

212. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1921, p.6. quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.50. Canner says, 'The Bureaux continued to stress the importance of future prospects. This advice was sometimes accepted but when parents were unemployed their children's earnings were vitally important and work was accepted, irrespective of conditions and prospects'.
213. Quoted in id., p.126.

> Many juveniles accepted the first job offered to them rather than first considering the whole field of employment. 214

By 1939, although officials from the Bureaux continued to visit local schools regularly in order to 'check too hasty entrance into employment', this advice was still being rejected by 'many juveniles'.[215]

There is also evidence that the relationship between the J.E.B. and local employers was far from reciprocal at this period. The supervisor at the headquarters Bureau in the city centre refused to place teenage earners in certain occupations such as theatre work and billiard hall work or into any occupation which, due to long hours, prevented them from attending evening school.[216] In a radio broadcast to Manchester schools in 1925, he warned the prospective school leavers against accepting 'blind-alley' employment such as 'becoming an unskilled machine minder or labourer' and said that employers were only interested in them as labour.[217] In a second broadcast to school leavers, he even instructed prospective school leavers not to waste time and money on visits to the cinema and to join a youth club.[218]

214. id., p.127.
215. id., p.128.
216. id., pp.39, 183.
217. id., p.122.
218. ibid.

To some local employers it must have seemed as though officials at the Bureaux were a perpetual thorn in their side. Canner overlooks this but it is implicit in what she says:

> Juvenile Employment Officers sometimes visited employers to assist juveniles to overcome their employment difficulties and to acquaint employers of the law relating to the employment of juveniles. 219

These periodic visits to employers were still being undertaken at the end of the inter-war period.[220]

To teenage boys and girls the Bureaux literature, which was circulated through all the local schools in the 1930s, must have seemed incredibly patronising; particularly that which instructed them on how to spend their leisure time wisely. The following extract is from a pamphlet which was sent to local schools in 1936:

> Remember, if you are not at school or at work you are not standing still, you are going backward... Then, what about your leisure time...? There are people who do not know how to use it to the best advantage.... the Officers of the Bureaux can assist you by introduction to some After-Care Committee, Club, Boys' Brigade, Scout Troop, Girls' Club, Girl Guides,.. where you may usefully employ your time both in summer and winter. 221

219. id., p.183.
220. id., p.140.
221. M.E.C., J.E.B., Advice To Boys and Girls About To Leave School, Manchester 1936, M.C.R.L., Local History Department.

The After-Care work of the Bureaux was begun in 1925 when a team of voluntary workers were employed to visit the homes of all boys and girls in the city who were between the ages of 14 and 18 and in employment. The work was primarily intended to encourage young people to join evening classes or youth movements as well as informing them of the placement work of the Bureaux. 24 District Care Committees were set up to administer the scheme but by 1937 only 5 of these were still functioning and by this time only those who were considered by headmasters to be 'in special need of supervision and help' were visited.[222]

The placement work of the local Bureaux did achieve greater success than their After-Care schemes in the inter-war period. But using the services of the Bureaux to find work was, it seems, both a lengthy and an uncertain exercise. The following account illustrates how boys wishing to take up messenger work using the official service were recruited:

> Upon each occasion when candidates are required, an examination of the whole Waiting List is conducted by the Bureau... The results are sent to the employer, so that by this system each boy has an equal opportunity, and the employer enjoys the full benefits of the popularity of his vacancies by a wide and comprehensive selection. 223

222.Canner, op.cit., p.184.
223.M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1934, pp.3-4.

Probably many teenage boys and girls from the working-class at this period entered jobs not through using the above service but by using more informal means. As one man who served an apprenticeship at an engineering firm in Trafford Park shortly after the First World War commented:

> ... it was every father's ambition to get the sons to be an apprentice, so you, just as you're 14 somebody tells you... apply here, apply there, one of my neighbours told me dad for me to go and apply at the Westinghouse and they took me on... 224

Exactly how many local teenage boys and girls found jobs the same way is, of course, impossible to say. Nevertheless, the evidence produced in this chapter suggests that a large number of working-class boys and girls did use the official Juvenile Employment Bureaux in the city, particularly in their early teens. Reading between the lines of official reports, it appears that those who did use this service were highly selective in the type of employment they would accept: what the official at the Bureaux considered suitable work did not always tally with what young people themselves considered suitable or attractive employment.

In conclusion, then, it appears that teenage wage-earners in Manchester displayed a considerable degree of

224.M.S.O.H.A., Tape 780.

independence or autonomy in their choice of work in the '20s and '30s. Certainly job choice was not simply decided by parents as seems to have been the case in the textile towns and other single industry towns of Lancashire in this period. Young wage-earners in Manchester also exercised a considerable amount of independence at work, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. Middle-class critics who argued that some young workers - those employed in so-called 'blind-alley' jobs - were trapped, were alarmists who were out of touch with what these young workers considered attractive employment. Van boy work and warehouse work and other so-called 'blind-alley' work offered 14 and 15 year olds, who might decide to take up an apprenticeship at 16, attractive wages and ample opportunities for doing overtime and earning even higher pay. Many boys, it seems, deferred apprenticeships for two years in order to earn some money doing such work and some girls did too. Contemporaries such as William McG.Eagar, John Jewkes, E.S.Griffith and R.A.Joseph seem to have overlooked the fact that many young wage-earners moved out of 'unskilled' or 'semi-skilled' work at 16 to take up 'skilled' apprenticeships.

This chapter has largely focused on the labour market behaviour of 14 to 20 year olds in the 1920s and 1930s. But what did young wage-earners, once they had settled into an occupation, feel about their work ? What was their attitude towards employers ? What was their attitude towards strikes ?

These are some of the questions which will be discussed in the next chapter, Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: DEFERENTIAL WORKERS?: YOUNG WAGE-EARNERS AND THEIR WORK.

'I am no longer interested in history, as I have never found anyone of my age who is' a teenage working girl from Manchester told a research student from Manchester University in the mid-1930s.[1] But did teenage wage-earners from the working-class derive any satisfaction from their work? Having shown in the last chapter that the vast majority of boys and girls, locally, were in full-time employment from about the age of 14 right up to at least the age of 21, this is clearly an important subject. It is, however, one which both historians of 'youth' and historians of work have devoted little, if any, attention to. This chapter will attempt to deal more substantially than historians have done with the whole question of the young wage-earner's attitude to his or her work using the young wage-earners of Manchester as a case study. Firstly, though, a brief review of the existing literature on this subject seems appropriate.

Recent historians of work have attempted, in the words of one historian, 'to reconstruct the working experiences of ordinary men and women', but they have had little to say about young wage-earners and their experience of work.[2] In

1. Harley, op.cit., p.17.
2. For two recent essays on work which fail to identify and discuss teenage workers as a separate group in the workforce, see P.Joyce's essay, 'Work' in F.M.L.Thompson (ed.), The Cambridge Social History of Great Britain, 1750-1950, Volume II, (forthcoming) and J.Benson's essay, 'Work' in J.Benson (ed.), The Working Class in England 1875-1914, Kent 1985, Chapter 3. For the quotation cited in the text see id., p.64.

his recent review essay on the historical study of work, John Benson draws attention to 'the virtual neglect of women's non-market household labour', but he fails to mention the equally neglected teenage element in the paid workforce.[3] Moreover, this gap has been evaded rather than filled by historians of 'working-class youth'. In his book Hooligans or Rebels? An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood and Youth 1889-1939 (1981) Stephen Humphries argues that the street and gang life of the period, which is his main concern, provided both working-class girls and working-class boys with a means of escaping what the author terms 'the routine drudgery of work'.[4] In a similar vein, Jerry White has recently argued that the world of work held no attraction whatsoever for the boys of Campbell Road, Islington, in the inter-war period. Forced to suffer the 'disappointments of ill-paid, unstimulating work at long hours' during the day time, they sought consolation in the evenings in a Bunk culture organised around the street: in gambling, drinking, sport and street theatre.[5] This street culture was a staunchly masculine culture but, argues White, it offered male youths a status and recognition which their work could not provide:

> The cultivation of physical strength and its display through aggression... the male-dominated underworld... all held some attractions for the young men of Campbell Road. Here was a world in which they could

3. id., p.63.
4. Humphries, op.cit., p.138. For a similar view of girls' work in the inter-war period (described as 'a dreary routine') see L.Davidoff and B.Westover, "'From Queen Victoria to the Jazz Age': Women's World in England 1880-1939 "in id., (eds.), Our Work, Our Lives, Our Words: Women's History and Women's Work, Hampshire 1986, p.28.
5. White, op.cit., pp.161, 164, 197.

> compete and value themselves more highly if they won: it was hard to win in the work dominated world outside. 6.

Robert Roberts's view of these male street cultures was a very different one. The gangs which met each evening in inter-war Salford where the author himself grew up (he was born in a Salford slum in 1905) spent most of the time, apparently, discussing their work:

> During each nightly meeting the young workers, once fully integrated, listened, questioned, argued and received unawares an informal education. Here work-a-day life beyond his personal ken came up for scrutiny. Jobs in factory, pit, mill, dock and wharf were mulled over and their skills explained. From first-hand experience, youths compared wages, hours, conditions, considered labour prospects, were advised on whom to ask for when seeking a job and what to say. All this was bread and butter talk.7.

It would appear, then, that work was not simply perceived as 'routine drudgery', even by male youths who belonged to street gangs. In fact, work was a major topic of conversation among male youths and the world of work seems to have penetrated deeply into the life of the street.

If historians of work and historians of male youth have had little to say about the teenage wage-earners' attitude to work and experiences at work, in the recent past,Elizabeth Roberts has made a start in this direction.[8] Her interviews

6.id., p.164.
7.R.Roberts, op.cit., p.157.
8.E.Roberts, op.cit., Chapter 2.

with working-class women in Lancaster, Preston and Barrow strongly suggested to the author that work had an intrinsic moral value, even to the young, in the inter-war period. She points out that working-class children were:

> brought up in the belief that not only was hard work vitally necessary for the survival of both the individual and the family, but that work had an intrinsic moral value. Therefore those who did not work carried the stigma of being idlers, or good-for-nothings. Children learned too, from both home and school, that it was essential to do a job to the best of one's ability.9.

Roberts's point seems a valid one but the author can be accused of overlooking the extent to which young workers became disillusioned with their work and the various ways in which they expressed this. The majority of the young female workers in her study were deferential to the point of muteness in their relationship with their employers.('Their basic deference, insecurity, their fear of losing respectability, but most of all their chronic poverty which drove them to work, all militated both against going on strike and remembering such an action even if they took part in it', Roberts states[10]). This is in line with her general thesis that obedience to authority was an attitude inculcated in the family which was naturally extended to employers: 'It was unlikely', Roberts argues,

9. id., p.51.
10. id., p.49.

> that at any time in this period [c.1890-1940] working-class girls entered the world of work determined to challenge the authority of their employer. 11.

Already in this thesis it has been argued that young workers in Manchester were far less deferential towards officials at the J.E.B.s, and seemingly, towards employers, too, than were young workers in North-West Lancashire, according to Elizabeth Roberts. This chapter will focus more closely than Chapter did on the relationship between employers and their teenage workers and it will attempt to ascertain whether young workers in Manchester were deferential towards their employers. A number of employers in the city would have regarded themselves as paternalistic employers especially employers in the engineering trades such as Mather and Platt, Hans Renold and Metropolitan Vickers. But, as will be demonstrated below, even the relationship between a paternalistic employer and his young workers could break down. It was not necessarily always a good-natured reciprocal relationship, as Roberts seems to imply.

Roberts cites no evidence, in her account of women's lives in the period between 1890 and 1940, of young factory workers in north-east Lancashire ever clashing openly with their employers. There is no mention in her book of any strike action by teenage workers, for instance. She mentions that the

11. id., p.46.

cotton workers of Preston organised a number of strikes in the early 1930s; but, unfortunately, does not say anything about the age-groups involved in these strikes. It would be interesting to know how many girls under the age of 21 participated in the strikes.

In Manchester, over 13,000 trade apprentices in the local engineering trades went on strike in September 1937 in a dispute with their employers, essentially, over pay. This strike lasted for three weeks and the apprentices, who organised it entirely themselves, achieved a historic victory.[12]

Strike action was not the only strategy available to young workers whose employers attempted to demand too much from them. The bottom line, if a particular employer or employment proved intolerable, was that young workers could change their job ,which, as we saw in the last chapter, many did particularly between the ages of 14 and 16. There were other, less drastic, ways though of coping with oppressive working conditions.

The strategy most frequently adopted to relieve the boredom of work which was intrinsically uninteresting, was to engage a colleague or colleagues in conversation. Industrial psychologists argued that this strategy was also a deliberate attempt to interrupt production in some factories.[13] Another

12. See below, pp.136-7, 139-142, 144.
13. See the following report: Medical Research Council, Industrial Health Research Board, Incentives in Repetitive Work: A Practical Experiment in A Factory, by S.Wyatt, London 1934.

disruptive tactic young workers frequently resorted to was the impromptu break to smoke a cigarette.[14] Trade apprentices were also forever stopping work to subject the youngest apprentices at a particular firm to a series of usually unpleasant ordeals during the first few days or so of their apprenticeship.[15] Young workers at some firms would also boycott the social and recreational facilities that their employers provided for them; either that or they would destroy them.[16] Some would deliberately miss evening classes and so on.[17]

More will be said about young workers' resistance to employers later in this chapter but the chapter will now

14. The engineering apprentices at Marlowe's frequently indulged in this activity. See Walter Greenwood, Love on the Dole, 1933 repr. Middlesex 1981. Marlowe's was, apparently, based on the Metropolitan Vickers engineering firm in Trafford Park. This is, at any rate, the view of Edmund and Ruth Frow who were Greenwood's contemporaries. See E.Frow and R.Frow, Manchester's Big House in Trafford Park: Class Conflict and Collaboration at Metro-Vicks, Manchester 1983, p.31.
15. For the particularly unpleasant ordeals suffered by T.R.Dennis, who served his apprenticeship in a Cabinet Maker's shop in Preston during the 1920s, see J.Burnett (ed.), Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s, London 1974, pp.347-355. See also Robert Roberts's autobiographical A Ragged Schooling: Growing up in the Classic Slum, Manchester 1976, repr. London 1984, pp.158-168 for the author's less unpleasant experiences of apprenticeship in a Salford engineering works.
16. Cora Tenen found, in interviews with 14 to 18 year-olds who were employed at a clothing factory in Lancashire during the Second World War, that the extensive welfare services provided by the firm - which included free medical, sun-ray, dental and optical services; sick funds; a sports club; a library and a canteen service - were 'largely ignored in practice by the young workers' owing to their strong feelings of resentment against the management. She was in contact with young workers at the above firm for a period of three months. During that time the firm's Sports Room was 'completely wrecked by boys in the factory' on two occasions known to the author.See C.Tenen, 'Adolescent Attitudes to Authority at Work', unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manchester, 1945, pp.134, 143.
17. See Walter Greenwood's interview with an apprentice in Walter Greenwood, How The Other Man Lives, London 1939?, Chapter XVII (p.120)on this.

consider in rather more detail the strategies local employers adopted for training their young workers.

A number of local employers had set up works schools for their apprentices even before the President of the Board of Education, Herbert Fisher, recommended this measure in his Education Bill of 1917. Sir William Mather had opened a science and technical school for the apprentices at his Salford engineering firm in 1873 'for the purpose of enabling the apprentices of the Salford Iron Works to study technical subjects allied to their trade'.[18] This works school remained in operation until 1905 after which all the apprentices at the firm were obliged to attend one of the technical schools in Manchester or Salford as a condition of their employment. The most able apprentices at the firm were excused work one day a week to attend the Municipal School of Technology in Manchester. The remainder were obliged to attend evening continuation classes. The first group had to pay all their fees themselves and the second group had to contribute towards the fees. The firm did award prizes, however, to their best students.[19]

William Mather was not alone among employers - either nationally or locally - in insisting that apprentices

18. The above information was contained in a reply to a questionnaire which had been sent to the firm's management by Professor M.E.Sadler from Manchester University. See M.E. Sadler (ed.), Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere, Manchester 1907, pp.282-3.
19. id., pp.282-3, 307.

at his firm should attend evening schools. Michael Sadler, a Professor of Education at Manchester University, sent a questionnaire to 195 firms around the country in 1907 and received replies from 67 employers who either provided training schemes themselves for their adolescent workers or utilised schemes run by the local education authority.[20] A number of Manchester employers completed the questionnaire. Baxendale and Co., an engineering firm in Miller Street, Manchester, sent all their boy apprentices to evening classes at the Municipal School of Technology and paid each boy's fees. Likewise, Thomas Larmuth and Co., an engineering firm in Salford, sent all of their apprentices to evening classes and paid for each apprentice to attend. Meldrum Brothers Ltd., in Timperley, sent their apprentices to day classes held at the Municipal Training School in Manchester and some were sent to a technical school in Altrincham This firm provided its apprentices with 'assistance' towards the fees. Finally, Hans Renold Ltd., another engineering firm, sent the best three apprentices at the firm to a day class once a week at the Municipal School of Technology in 1907. The fees were paid by the firm and the apprentices were also paid their normal day's wages for attending. Other apprentices at the firm were encouraged, but not obliged, to attend evening classes. Those that did were excused from doing overtime and if their attendance rate was high their fees were reimbursed by the firm at the end of each session.[21]

20. id., p.265.
21. id., pp.274-5, 280-1, 284-5.

William Mather was, it seems, the only Manchester employer who had set up a works school for apprentices before 1914; but he was not the only employer in the country to have done so.[22] The Cadbury Brothers, whose chocolate firm was situated at Bournville in Birmingham, reported in 1907 that they ran an evening school during the winter months for all the firm's employees who were under the age of 16. They were obliged to attend the works school two evenings a week for two hours and employees who were older than 16 were 'encouraged' to attend technical classes. Information about the subjects taught at the school was not provided in the questionnaire the firm was asked to complete, but interesting details are provided on a wide range of social and recreational facilities on the firm's premises. Boys under the age of 16, for instance, were obliged to attend physical training classes held at the works for two 30 minute periods every week. Girls under 15 were obliged to attend swimming classes (there was a swimming pool on the premises) or 'Swedish gymnastics' classes three times a week. The firm also ran gardening classes for its boy and girl employees, ambulance and sick nursing classes during the winter, and also had its own boys' club.[23]

22. id., pp.282-3, 294-5. Mather was also the first engineering employer in the country to introduce the 48 hour week. On this see Our Journal: The Magazine of the Employees of Mather and Platt Ltd., January 1939, p.2. M.C.R.L., Social Science Library. According to his biographer, William Mather introduced this measure 'being convinced, as every thoughtful employer is, that reasonable hours of work and reasonable opportunities of leisure were the only lines on which a better and higher type of citizen could be produced, and that... it was leisure for study and education for the higher life which was required'. See L.E.Mather (ed.), The Right Honourable Sir William Mather, 1838-1920, London 1926, p.135.
23. Sadler(ed.), op.cit., pp.294-5.

The Cadbury Brothers were archetypal paternalistic employers. Edward Cadbury, for instance, wrote of the need for young factory workers to be provided with 'wholesome amusement' outside of working hours in his book Women's Work and Wages which was published in 1906: 'Both inside and outside the factory', he wrote, 'the lives of working girls are too often barren of all that gives wholesome relaxation and brightness'.[24] The degrading influence of men and married women on working girls was all too evident inside the factory: 'It is a matter of common complaint', he stated, 'that the men and married women talk in a way unfit for the ears of young girls'.[25] Girls who worked alongside adult workers were also, he felt, tempted to drink and gamble: 'It is well known that many girls share the craze for betting which is becoming more and more common among working women... many girls bet on coming out of the factory...'[26] Another custom which was detrimental to the young working girl, he argued, was the practice of celebrating Christmas, weddings and birthdays at the workplace. He described the procedure surrounding this practice at his own firm thus:

> A group of girls form a party club, i.e. each subscribes 1d or 2d for several successive weeks, and on the appointed day perhaps the foreman or forewoman stops work half an hour earlier, and

24. E.Cadbury, C.Matheson and G.Shann, Women's Work and Wages, London 1906, p.245. On the need for 'wholesome amusement' see pp.240-2, 245-6.
25. id., p.195.
26. id., p.198.

> allows them to stay rather late, and they enjoy cakes and tea, with which they mix rum or gin... The girls may or may not get partially intoxicated, but at least they are engendering a vicious habit, and in many cases young girls dare not refuse to join, and they thus start the taste for a dangerous indulgence.[27]

Sir William Mather was an employer who was in the same mould as Cadbury. He was concerned about the young wage-earner's attitude to his or her work and spoke of 'the want of aptitude and intelligence, application and interest', displayed by 'a considerable majority' of the boys and girls at his firm, in a paper which he delivered before a conference of educationalists in Nottingham in 1913.[28] 'The majority', he proceded to argue, 'seem to look on life with vacant eyes and minds... They have little power of thinking for themselves or of desiring to know the why and wherefore of the simplest operations'.[29] Mather's solution to this lack of interest in work, was, as indicated above, to insist that the teenage members of his workforce attend evening schools. He told the conference in 1913:

> For those... who are employed at the early age of 14 years, it is absolutely imperative, if they are to become of real value to themselves and their country, that they should be induced or compelled to avail themselves... of the opportunities provided in the Evening Continuation Schools. 30.

27. id., p.196.
28. Sir William Mather, The Co-operation of Employers and Educational Authorities, Nottingham 1913, p.7.
29. ibid.
30. id., p.8.

But, as his paper went on to indicate, Mather was primarily interested in further educating the working-class boy and, moreover, only those boys who were serving an apprenticeship.[31] The practice at his own firm, in 1913, was that 'every boy coming to us at 15 years of age - we do not take them younger - must attend... (evening schools)... three evenings a week'.[32] These classes, which were run by the local education authority and provided the boys at Mather's engineering firm with both vocational and non-vocational instruction up to the age of 21, were also, in Sir William Mather's view, 'a system.. of compulsion of the most effectual and unobjectionable sort to save young people, on leaving the Elementary Schools and beginning to earn money, from falling, as they do in many cases, into the habits which only promote their own ruin, and becoming as men and women a burden instead of a blessing to the country'.[33]

Mather set up another works school at his Salford engineering firm in 1918 . This school, like its predecessor, was exclusively for boy apprentices at the firm and all boy apprentices between 14 and 17 were obliged to attend the school for nine hours every week during working hours.[34] During the first two years the boys were given a general grounding in a number of subjects: engineering, industrial history, drawing, elementary economics, elementary physics and chemistry, maths and physical exercises. But the curriculum became more specialised

31. id., pp.11-12.
32. ibid.
33. id., pp.12-13.
34. R.W.Ferguson and A.Abbott, Day Continuation Schools, London 1935, pp.23, 46, 47.

and more orientated towards engineering in the third year when the apprentices began to learn machine drawing, hand sketching and practical mechanics.[35] Most of the apparatus used in these classes was constructed in the school in the evenings and many of the boys gave up their free time, apparently, to undertake this work.[36] The works school at Mather and Platt's engineering firm was also the centre of a number of social activities laid on for the boy apprentices by the firm. These included a boy scout troop, a camping club, football teams, cricket teams and a radio club.[37]

The regime which Sir William Mather first set up for apprentices at his firm in 1873 was adopted by one of Manchester's largest engineering firms, the British Westinghouse Company (later Metropolitan Vickers) shortly before the First World War. In January 1914, 300 boys employed by this firm competed for 100 places on the firm's new apprentice training scheme which was to be run from the firm's new 'Works School for Apprentices'. The cleverest boys were discarded as being well able to look after their own further education through evening schools and private study. The weakest academically were also discarded '[i]n order that the experiment should not be prejudiced by the introduction of poor material'. Those of average intelligence (100 boys of whom only 25% were 'bound' apprentices) were chosen for the new scheme.[38] Initially, they

35. id., p.47.
36. ibid.
37. ibid.
38. A.P.M.Fleming and J.G.Pearce, The Principles of Apprentice Training, London 1916, Chapter XII (pp.141-4).

were taught, for one hour every day four mornings a week, four subjects: mathematics, mechanics, drawing and properties of materials. On the fifth day each week they were given a one hour test on the week's work. By September 1914 only boys who were aged 16 or over and who agreed to stay with the firm until the age of 21 were admitted to the scheme (a written agreement had to be signed by the boy's parents) and it was reported in 1916 that: 'The number of boys actually apprenticed and receiving instruction is only a fraction of the total number of boys employed at the works'.[39] Only 5½% of all the boys under 18 at the firm were receiving tuition in October 1914.[40]

Because the apprentice training scheme at the British Westinghouse engineering firm was so exclusive, this no doubt created a divide between the apprentices on the one hand and the rest of the workforce on the other. The foremen were not happy about the scheme because it meant releasing a number of boys from the shopfloor five times a week for five hours a week.[41] The majority of the workforce were, apparently, 'quite indifferent' towards the scheme but nothing was said about how other teenage members of the workforce reacted.[42] No doubt the 350 apprentices who were pupils at the school in 1918 were as much a subject for ridicule as a source of envy among the 1,200 boys at the firm who were not permitted to attend the school.[43] Winifred Hindshaw, a Lecturer in Education at Manch-

39. id., pp.141-4, 155.
40. id., p.155.
41. id., p.152.
42. ibid.
43. For details of the numbers involved in the scheme see Winifred Hindshaw 'Works Schools for Engineers' in J.J.Findlay (ed.), The Young Wage-Earner And The Problem of his Education, London 1918, pp.162-174.

ester University, thoroughly approved of the scheme, however; she described the apprentices at the above firm as 'young aristocrats of the labour world'.[44] This was a view the apprentices themselves probably shared since they had their own magazine, The Trade Apprentice , which was compiled by a 'council' of 16 or 17 boys. The magazine recorded social events 'especially those of interest to the Trade Apprentices' Association' and contained articles on technical subjects and 'other topics for the serious boy reader'.[45]

Boy apprentices at Hans Renold's engineering firm in Burnage were regarded by their employer as 'an intellectual elite', according to Winifred Hindshaw. She also pointed out that this employer was thoroughly opposed to the idea of allowing the unskilled members of his workforce to attend this firm's works school.[46] Apprentices at this firm spent one day a week at the school learning both vocational subjects such as science, maths, drawing and woodwork and subjects which were not strictly vocational such as english (where the emphasis was

44. id., p.172.
45. id., p.171.
46. id., p.167. This impression also receives support in C.G. Renold's history of the firm, Joint Consultation Over Thirty Years: A Case Study, London 1950. The author of this study points out, for instance, that before the First World War the firm's founder Hans Renold would present 'deserving' apprentices with special treats. These included invitations to tea at the Governing Director's house; sometimes he would present them with flowers from his greenhouse and occasionally he would take 'his' apprentices on a trip to a neighbouring firm. See, in particular, id.,p.95.

on lessons in 'citizenship') and drill.[47] Altogether around 120 apprentices at Hans Renold's were being educated at the works school in October 1917; but around 500 girls under the age of 18 who worked at the firm received no instruction whatsoever.[48]

This, then, was more or less the sum total of the educational instruction provided by Manchester employers for boys and girls engaged in manual work at the start of the inter-war period. As was indicated in Chapter 1, the position at the very end of the inter-war period was little different: the overwhelming majority of the local teenage population, 70%, even as late as October 1940 received no further instruction of an educational nature after leaving elementary schools at 14.[49] Thus the girl who told Joan L.Harley 'I am no longer interested in history, as I have never found anyone of my age who is' probably spoke for the vast majority of her age-group, boys as well as girls. Moreover, it must be stressed that those employers who did provide instruction for their teenage workers - which invariably meant instruction solely for their boy apprentices - did not constitute a majority of employers, either locally or nationally. Having said this, the Manchester employers referred to above and others in the vicinity of Manchester acquired a good reputation nationwide for the educational schemes they instituted at their works. The fact that a number of local employers were asked to give

47.Findlay (ed.), op.cit., p.166.
48.ibid.
49.See above p. 16.

evidence before the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education, which met in 1917, is proof of this.[50] It seems worthwhile, therefore, to examine the inter-war success of these employer-organised regimes for young workers especially since such schemes had an extremely high profile locally.

The first question which needs to be answered about employer-run works schools for young workers in the inter-war period is: Did they continue to be reserved largely for apprentices ? A number of local employers who gave evidence before the 1917 Committee were frankly opposed to the idea of providing instruction for other groups within the teenage workforce.[51] Mr.T.D.Barlow, a cotton manufacturer in Bolton, argued that further education was less important in the case of young cotton spinners than in the engineering trades.[52] Neither was he in favour of the Committee's proposal to provide all young wage-earners over the age of 14 with part-time instruction of some kind, arguing that 'part-time day training is not necessary so far as the textile trades are concerned'. Such a system, he argued, 'would cause serious inconvenience, and even dislocation, in the cotton trade'.[53]

50. A number of local employers gave evidence before the Committee. See, for instance, Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to employment after the War, Volume II, Summaries of Evidence and Appendices, Cmd. 8577, London 1917, pp.13-15, 20-21, 22, 23.
51. See id., pp.20-21, 22.
52. id., p.21.
53. ibid.

H.P.Greg, another cotton manufacturer who gave evidence before the Committee, also shared this view. He argued that a system of part-time Day Classes for 'juveniles' should not be introduced in the cotton trade 'if the supply of labour were thereby caused to be intermittent, as it is essential to keep the machinery going'.[54] This Witness proceeded to argue that 'all part-time instruction is essentially scrappy and unsatisfactory, and... only a few profit by it. Whole-time education followed by whole-time employment is much to be preferred'.[55]

The Reverend R.R.Hyde, a boys' welfare officer at the Ministry of Munitions, also gave evidence before the 1917 Committee. He had visited many firms, including several of the largest employers of boy labour in the country and he believed that 'on the whole the raising of the school age would be more acceptable to employers than the compulsory granting of facilities for time off'.[56] Employers in certain trades, particularly those who employed large numbers of unskilled boy labourers, ['regarded] the suggestion that facilities should be given for general education ... with suspicion', he stated. Employers in engineering works, however, proved the exception to this rule. The Reverend had visited a number of engineering firms which provided special classes for 'boys who intended to become tradesmen'. The function of these classes, he told

54. id., p.22.
55. ibid.
56. id., p.76.

the Committee, was to provide boys with the necessary theoretical background to their practical work on the shopfloor. In the initial stages of their apprenticeship the instruction in these classes was aimed at providing them with a 'technical knowledge' of the various machines in use and of the various operations performed in the works. Throughout the early stages of their apprenticeship and particularly during their weekly classes, the boys were closely supervised by a single teacher (invariably a foreman) who noted their particular abilities. The foremen in the various workshops then selected boys for various tasks on the basis of their individual abilities.[57]

Even in the progressive engineering industry, then, works schools were invariably intended simply for apprentices and, as the Reverend R.R.Hyde pointed out, employers who set up such schools were keen to preserve this state of affairs:

> Great stress was laid on the need for making provision for the supply of future skilled workers... certain firms deplored the constant poaching by neighbouring firms who took no trouble to produce their own skilled adult labour. 58.

A.P.M.Fleming from the British Westinghouse electrical engineering firm in Trafford Park, Manchester, told the 1917 Committee that the works school at his own firm had brought apprentices

57. ibid.
58. ibid.

into a closer relationship with the works staff.[59] This was important in firms like his own which were otherwise vast and impersonal institutions. Works schools which established 'a close connection... between apprentices and the works staff', he argued, 'can be utilised in replacing that personal touch between employer and employee which is not otherwise possible under modern industrial conditions'.[60] His own firm certainly attempted to cultivate a close relationship between apprentices and the works staff and also to make the apprentices aware of their privileged status, through the mechanism of the works school. The curriculum at the school, for instance, included lessons on the 'rights, privileges and duties' of an apprentice; as well as arithmetic, mechanics and physics. Some senior trade apprentices were also trained as lecturers for the firm's works school.[61]

What of other groups within the teenage workforce? What, if any, training or extra-curricula activities were provided for 'unskilled' boy labourers and what facilities were provided for girls employed in manual work? The 1917 Departmental Committee, mentioned above, was specifically set up to consider what steps should be taken to provide education and instruction for boys and girls who were 'at the

59. id., p.14.
60. ibid.
61. ibid.

bottom' of the manual hierarchy and employed not, like apprentices, because of their future value to industry but 'merely... for their immediate commercial utility upon simple operations' in 'blind-alley' occupations.[62] The authors of the Committee's Final Report acknowledged that the vast majority of 'juveniles' began work in such occupations. But those who entered apprenticeships at about the age of 16 at least embarked upon some period of formal training, whereas those who remained in 'unskilled' or 'casual' occupations received no training whatsoever and, because they earned high wages, were thought to be more financially independent than poorly paid apprentices.[63] The problem presented by this group, then, was not simply to do with the lack of training they received in the workplace but also to do with how they spent their free time outside the factory. The latter question occupied the Committee most and, among other things, their Final Report drew attention to the 'lamentable shrinkage'in evening school attendance during the war; the relaxation of parental controls; the exceptionally high wages paid to juveniles ,which, tne Committee argued, had 'induced habits of foolish and mischievous extravagance ' and 'the withdrawal of influences making for the social improvement of boys and girls' ,which, in many districts, had led to 'a noticeable deterioration in behaviour and morality'. Gambling, for instance, was said to have increased among the young. All in

62. See the Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to employment after the War , Volume I, Report, Cmd 8512, London 1917, pp.ii, 4.
63. id., pp.2, 4.

all the Committee argued that 'many of the tendencies adversely affecting the development of character and efficiency have ... been accentuated'.[64]

In response to the problems presented by the young wage-earner, the Committee recommended that all the 14-18 age-group should be forced to attend 'Day Continuation Classes' twice a week for not less than eight hours overall and for 40 weeks a year until they reached 18. 'Some handrail is required over the bridge which crosses the perilous waters of adolescence, and it is this that a sound system of Continuation Classes may help to provide, the Committee argued.[65] It was hoped that a system introduced along these lines after the war would prevent 'adolescents' from reaching too soon after leaving school 'the fully independent status of wage-earning manhood'.[66] Such a system would also mean that they would 'still be under authority and open to the influences of encouragement and reproof, of the corporate life and the offered ideals, which... are the essence of the educational process'.[67] Despite their brief, then, the Committee were really preoccupied with the problem of the wage-earning boy and the lack of discipline he displayed both inside and outside the workplace. The Committee's aim was akin to the aim of the Scout Movement and the Lads' Clubs: to keep boys as boys and under some form of

64. id., p.5.
65. id., pp.8, 12, 14.
66. id., p.12.
67. ibid.

direct and wholesome control, outside the workplace, for as long as possible during the difficult years of 'adolescence'.

It comes as no surprise that so much of this Report reflected the specific fears of those in the youth movement. The Committee of 18 included Charles Russell, the Chief Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools at the Home Office and an ex-youth leader;[68] Reginald Bray, a writer on youth welfare and another advocate of youth movements and Spurley Hey, the Director of Education in Manchester, who was a firm believer in the value of youth movements.[69] The youth movement lobby was also strongly represented among those who gave evidence before the Committee. The most distinguished youth leader in the country, the Chief Scout Lieutenant -General Sir Robert Baden-Powell, for instance, gave evidence. So, too, did William McG.Eagar, a Boys' Club leader in Bermondsey; Lily Montagu, the Chairman of the National Organisation of Girls' Clubs and Charles E.Clift, the Chairman of Manchester and District Lads' Club Federation.[70] The influence of the youth movement lobby on the Committee's main proposals was greater than that of any other group including employers. As has been demonstrated, a number of employers who gave evidence were opposed to a scheme of 'Day Continuation Classes' for non-apprenticed adolescent workers because of the threat this would pose to production levels. Also, employers

68. id., p.ii.
69. ibid.
70. See Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education, Volume II, op.cit., pp.59-60, 74-77.

from the cotton industry argued that further education was an irrelevance in the cotton trade. But the Committee went against such evidence and endorsed the views of those in the youth movement that compulsory attendance at 'Day Classes' should be introduced for all those between the ages of 14 and 18 immediately after the war.[71]

The curriculum at these 'Day Continuation Classes' and the implementation of the whole scheme was left to the local education authorities. But the Committee were adamant that the proposed schools should not merely provide vocational instruction: 'the business of the classes', the Report stated, 'is to do what they can in making a reasonable human being and a citizen, and... if they do this, they will help to make a competent workman also.'[72] Again ,the parallel with the type of character-training undertaken by youth movements like the Boy Scouts is obvious. For the 14-16 age-group, a general and not a technical education was recommended; and, for girls, the Committee felt that domestic and practical subjects 'will play a considerable part'.[73] For the 16-18 age-group, the Committee recommended further specialisation in vocational subjects but also lessons in citizenship, music, art, local history, home industries, first-aid and natural history.

71. Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education, Volume I, op.cit., pp.12-14.
72. id., p.16.
73. ibid.

Also, 'in happily planned towns gardening will prove an invaluable subject', the Committee pointed out in their Final Report.[74] In addition to the above subjects, the Committee recommended that physical training 'should be regarded as an indispensable element in the curriculum' for the entire 14-18 age-group.[75] In suggesting this, the Committee was echoing a recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer at the Board of Education, Sir George Newman, who also gave evidence before the Committee. Newman had insisted that half an hour should be put aside for gymnastics exercises each day that 'adolescents' were in attendance at 'Day Continuation Schools'. The Committee also took the opportunity to argue that the School Medical Service should be extended to include wage-earning 'adolescents', who were not eligible for a State medical inspection or State medical benefits of any kind until the age of 16.[76]

Finally, the Committee also made suggestions on the types of recreation young wage-earners should be encouraged to take up outside the 'Day Continuation Class': 'In the summer', their Report recommended, 'recreation should as far as possible be in the open air... There will be games, and gardening, and cadet-training, and Scout-craft'. The Committee implied that the teachers in the 'Schools' would help to organise these facilities. During the winter months it was hoped that the 'Continuation Schools' would serve as a home for

74. id., p.17.
75. ibid.
76. id., p.18. See also Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education, Volume II, op.cit., pp.46-7 for Newman's evidence before the Committee.

innumerable clubs, debates, study circles, concerts, and 'other forms of social gathering'; as well as being a place where 'homework may be done under responsible supervision'.[77] The aim, of course, was to provide a counter-attraction to what the Report termed 'the poor alternatives offered by the inclement streets, the gambling pitch under the railway arch, and the garish entertainments which appear to be all that the low-grade theatres and picture palaces care to provide'.[78]

The Committee were convinced that the 'Day Continuation School' idea would be welcomed by teenage wage-earners: 'So far as the children are concerned', they pointed out in their Final Report, 'they [the children] readily accept an established order of things, and it will not be long before the juvenile takes his schooling up to the age of 18 as a matter of course...'[79] Their Report went on to state:

> it will prove possible, with the help of the Continuation Classes, to create between 14 and 18 such a living interest in the things of the mind, as will flood the voluntary classes for after-study, and make us one of the best instructed of European peoples.80

Attention must now be focused upon the outcome of the proposed 'Day Continuation' scheme.

77. Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education, Volume I, op.cit., p.18.
78. ibid.
79. ibid.
80. ibid.

The immediate outcome was that the Committee's main proposal relating to the 14-18 age-group - the setting up of Day Continuation Schools (D.C.S.s) - was taken up by the President of the Board of Education, Herbert Fisher, and included in the Education Bill he presented to the House of Commons on 10 August 1917.[81] In his opening speech, Fisher described that part of his Bill which dealt with D.C.S.s as 'the most novel, if not the most important provision in the Bill.'[82] He then proceeded to outline the benefits of the new scheme largely by reiterating the views of the 1917 Departmental Committee. He declared that under the new scheme:

> young persons who are not undergoing full-time instruction will be liberated from industrial toil for the equivalent of three half-days a week... The character of the instruction will be partly physical... We shall hope to continue the general education, the foundations of which have been laid in the Public Elementary School, and to give in addition vocational bias, the force of which will be graduated according to the age and occupation of the pupil.83

In concluding his speech, he reiterated the Committee's view of the D.C.S.'s primary function: 'the governing conception of the scheme', he argued:

> will be identical over the whole country - the production of good citizens, able to make the most of themselves and of the environments in which they are placed.84

81. Hansard (Parliamentary Debates), Fifth Series, Volume XCVII, 1917 , London 1917, columns 795-852.
82. id., col.806.
83. id., cols.807-808.
84. id., col.808.

The 'beneficial influence' of the D.C.S., Fisher argued, would also have other positive effects: 'young people', he said, 'will be more ready to join boys' and girls' clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and other such wholesome associations'.[85]

In outlining his proposals, Fisher also delivered a veiled but at times fairly explicit attack on employers the majority of whom, the Departmental Committee had been told, were indifferent to educational schemes for adolescent workers. Fisher declared that he felt:

> to the full the strength of the contention that young people, whatever may be their station in life, should primarily be regarded as subjects for education, and not as parts of the industrial machine.86.

He urged employers to recognise their 'educational responsibilities towards their employees' and intimated that the new D.C.S.s should be run during the daytime rather than in the evenings in order to ensure that young people were not forced to work 'unduly long hours' and attended the schools 'in a fit condition to benefit by the instruction'.[87] The D.C.S. was to be, in his words, 'an attempt to protect the rising generation... against the injurious effects of industrial pressure'.[88] Finally, presumably in an attempt to prevent devious employers from abusing the scheme, Fisher insisted that D.C.S.s were not to open on Sundays or on half-day holidays.[89]

85. id., col.809.
86. id., col.808.
87. id., col.807.
88. id., col.814.
89. id., col.807.

In the debate which followed, much of the discussion centred on how employers would react to the proposed scheme. One speaker felt that 'very many good employers' would welcome the scheme and stated that 'opinion among employers has been working very much in the direction of something of this kind'. The speaker in question, a Mr.Acland, said that he did not believe that employers were 'wholly utilitarian' in such matters as education.[90] The M.P. for Newcastle-under-Lyme, Colonel Wedgwood, believed, however, that employers were not interested in developing the 'character' of the young work-force but only interested in their industrial efficiency. He opposed the Education Bill, he said, because it was actually engineered by big businessmen who, through Day Continuation Classes, could impose some form of control over the working class in order to make them more efficient workers. 'These people', he argued (he had in mind big employers like Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee who had advertised their support for the Bill in the New Statesman), 'have in view the production of a working-class proletariat, who shall be drilled, disciplined and efficient tools for the purpose of production'.[91] As the above account of the Committee of Enquiry which discussed the setting up of the D.C.Ss has shown, Colonel Wedgwood was clearly wrong on this point. The most influential group in the setting up of the D.C.S.s were youth leaders, not employers.

90. id., col.824.
91. id., col.819. See also the Colonel's comments during the debate over the third reading of the Education Bill on 16 July 1918. Hansard (Parl.Debs.), Fifth Series, Volume 108, 1918 , London 1918, col.967.

The Colonel did make some valid criticisms of the proposed new scheme though. He argued, firstly, that young people themselves would resent being forced to attend a D.C.S. once a week: 'As children grow up into young men and women', he pointed out, 'they want less restriction, and they become more and more able to control themselves... without the need of restrictive legislation...'[92] He believed that D.C.S.s should be voluntary and not forced upon young wage-earners. He also opposed a raising of the school-leaving age to 14 on similar grounds; namely , that Parliament had no right to legislate on behalf of other people's children. If Parliament accepted Fisher's Education Bill, he argued, it would be:

> inflicting a burden on all the parents in this country, depriving them of the right to employ their children, enforcing education upon people, who very often do not want it, without their consent...93.

The D.C.S. scheme which was finally implemented under the Education Act of 1918 has received little coverage from historians. D.W.Thoms, considered the administrative background to the scheme and argued that Fisher's advisors were preoccupied with the question of national efficiency.[94] But he largely ignored the implementation of the scheme and its effectiveness at a local level. (The scheme as it applied to London was mentioned briefly). 'In essence', Thoms concluded,

92. id., col.972.
93. id., col.967.
94. D.W.Thoms , 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', History of Education, Volume 4, No.1, Spring 1975, pp.36-50.

> the future of the day continuation schools was in the balance by the end of 1919 and all but doomed by the close of the following year.95

The reasons for this, he argued, were, firstly, that local education authorities proved reluctant to build schools because of the economies forced upon them by the government immediately after the war and because of the operation of the Geddes 'axe'; secondly, that officials at the Board of Education adopted a 'somewhat casual approach to the matter'; thirdly, that employers were opposed to a system which would have made 'Day Continuation Classes' compulsory for their young employees and preferred a system of evening classes which would have no adverse effects on production levels in the factory and, fourthly, that parents of working-class children were also opposed to the new scheme.[96]

Thoms clearly exaggerates the demise of the D.C.S.s. Whilst a compulsory scheme may have been all but 'doomed' by the end of 1920, and certainly 'doomed' by May of 1922 when the 'D.C.S. experiment' was finally abandoned by Central Government, local schemes (which had been implemented in some areas even before the 1918 Education Act had been passed) survived on a voluntary basis into the 1930s. In Manchester, nine D.C.S.s were opened between 1918 and 1922 and eight of these were still providing a range of part-time courses for young cotton mill workers, engineering apprentices, teenage printers, teenage grocers and other teenage manual and clerical workers in 1935.[97]

95. id., p.45.
96. id., pp.47-8.
97. See M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., p.105 for a list of these schools. See also Ferguson and Abbott, op.cit., pp.vii, 22-3, 44-7, for the ones which survived.

It seems worthwhile, therefore, to examine the success of the D.C.S.s at a local level in this period although the information available on the schools is by no means comprehensive.

Two of the D.C.S.s still in existence, locally, in 1935 were exclusively for the young employees of two prominent local firms: Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee, a cotton firm, and Mather and Platt's engineering firm.[98] There is no information available on the D.C.S. at the former firm other than the fact that 'junior employees' at the Manchester branch of the firm were obliged to attend the D.C.S., which was in Bolton where the firm's headquarters were, once a week. The latter firm, as we saw earlier, had opened a D.C.S. for the apprentices at the firm in 1918. This D.C.S., or works school, was still being used by the firm to train its boy apprentices as late as 1939.[99] In January 1939, for instance, the firm's journal recorded that at their annual sports day in 1938 'the Works Schools Apprentices' made a formal presentation to a Mr. Joseph Mundy 'to mark the close of his 16 years service as Official Starter'.[100] It seems that on ritual occasions like sports days the apprentices of Mather and Platt's engineering firm were almost on public display and the management, in their speeches, told the apprentices at the firm to

98. id., pp.44-7.
99. id., p.47. See also Our Journal, op.cit., p.46.
100. id., p.49.

set a good example for the rest of the workforce to follow. After presenting the prizes at the above event, R.C.Mather directed his speech - which apparently 'gripped the attention of his youthful audience' - at the apprentices, urging them to insist on being players rather than workers. He told them:

> If you play in any hole and corner - in any back street or recreation ground - for any club, however poor and insignificant - you are worth more to your community than the misguided creatures who watch City or Broughton Rangers every week. 101.

Clearly, works events like the annual sports day and psychological warfare of the kind practised by L.E.Mather on the above occasion were important in creating an interest in the vocational, social and recreational activities organised by the firm.

Although the works school at the above firm was exclusively for apprentices, the firm also ran evening classes for its other young employees. Attendance at the shorthand class reached a peak in January 1939 when 55 girls enrolled for the course. There were also 'Keep Fit' classes for boy and girl employees in 1939 which had apparently 'proved popular'. There was a special evening class on the firm's premises for 'Iron Foundry apprentices' in 1939 ('boys attend for one evening a week and study Mathematics and Machine Drawing'). The firm also had its own squash court and its own

101.id., p.50.

cycling club (Park Rovers C.C.) which had been set up in November 1938 and had a membership of 25 in January 1939.[102]

Mather and Platt's vocational and non-vocational classes for their teenage workers functioned at a distance from the D.C.S.s which were set up in other parts of the city. The latter were organised and run exclusively by Manchester Education Committee which invited local employers from a number of different trades to send their teenage workers to classes situated not on the premises of an individual firm, but in school buildings owned by the M.E.C.[103] The arrangement was altogether more impersonal than the paternalistic system which appears to have operated quite successfully at Mather and Platt's engineering firm in Newton Heath.

M.E.C. undertook to provide Day Continuation Schools for all 'juvenile' employees (under 18s) in the city in 1917, though, as we saw earlier, a system of day and evening classes had been in operation locally and attracted young workers from certain local firms before this date.[104] The first 'Day Continuation Classes' in the city were held in the Blackley Municipal School and these began in January 1918; that is, before the 1918 Education Act was passed.[105] A number of other D.C.S.s, nine in all, were opened in other parts of the

102. id., pp.50-67.
103. M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., pp.112-114; M.E.C., Education In Manchester: A Survey of Progress 1924-1934, Manchester 1935, p.77; W.E.Taylor,'Educational Opportunities' in Odds and Ends: A Manuscript Magazine, Volume LXXXVI, 1946, pp.179-194 (p.192). M.C.R.L., Archives Department (M38/4/2/86).
104. M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., p.112.
105. ibid.

city between 1918 and 1922. Three of these were situated on the premises of individual firms: Mather and Platt's works school for apprentices in Newton Heath, Beyer Peacock's works school in Gorton and Hans Renold's works school for apprentices in Burnage.[106] Grey Mare Lane D.C.S. in Openshaw was run from a building which served as the local Wesleyan Sunday School at weekends.[107] The other D.C.S.s were in Byrom Street (in the city centre), Embden Street (in Hulme), Fir Street (in Miles Platting) and there was another D.C.S. on Oldham Road (in Newton Heath).[108] M.E.C. wholeheartedly supported the Government's original idea to make attendance at these schools compulsory but because the Government abandoned the scheme in the early 1920s the Manchester scheme was left to survive on a voluntary basis. That meant it was up to local employers whether they chose to send their young workers to the schools, but they were under no compulsion to do so.[109]

Edith A.Waterfall, in her book The Day Continuation School In England: Its Function and Future (published in 1923), argued that a number of employers in Manchester wholeheartedly supported the new scheme. Some 38 local firms sent young workers to the Hulme D.C.S. in the early 1920s. Some employers though proved reluctant to send their young workers to D.C.S.s

106. id., p.105.
107. Grey Mare Lane Day Continuation School (Openshaw), Log Book, 1923-1937, M.C.R.L., Archives Department, (M66/32 additional/ Box 1). None of the pages in this document are numbered. Where specific pages are referred to, therefore, the date under which the information can be found is given instead. See id., 15 March 1923 for the details cited in the text.
108. M.E.C. , General Survey, op.cit. p.105.
109. id., pp.28, 112; M.E.C., Education In Manchester, op,cit., p.77.

owing to the high costs involved.[110] One Manchester firm estimated that it cost them £10 a year to send a single junior employee to a D.C.S.[111] Even Waterfall admitted that it was not really in the employer's interest to provide such a costly education when there was no guarantee that the young workers sent to a D.C.S. would remain with the firm.[112] There was also some concern among local employers over the curriculum at D.C.S.s. There were obvious difficulties involved with administering a scheme for young people who were employed in different trades and who therefore had different requirements. Waterfall hinted at the difficulties which had arisen at the Hulme D.C.S.:

> In the case of the Hulme Day Continuation School, 38 firms are contributing, and this necessitates constant interchange of visits and much adjustment of school organisation to maintain interest and avoid friction. 113.

Since this D.C.S. was largely dependent on the patronage of two big employers - Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee and Hans Renold - it was probably the case that these two firms dictated the curriculum at the 'school'. But, despite this, the 'headmaster' at the 'school' sent regular reports on each pupil's progress to all the employers who participated in the scheme and employers were informed of each pupil's attendance rate.[114]

110. E.A.Waterfall, The Day Continuation School In England: Its Function and Future, London 1923, p.193.
111. ibid.
112. id., pp.193-4.
113. id., p.193.
114. id., p.198. See also Grey Mare Lane D.C.S., Log Book, op.cit., passim, for the same pattern.

The local D.C.S.s were clearly run as schools. Each 'school' had a 'headmaster' and a number of the 'pupils' at the 'schools' were appointed 'prefects'. It was hoped that putting some students into positions of responsibility in the 'schools' would somehow improve their behaviour and that of those below them inside the factory: 'The influence of the elected prefects', Edith Waterfall argued,

> extends, in practice, beyond the school and helps to raise the tone of the adolescent employees in the factory. The boys, or girls... will obey one of their number whom they know to be an elected leader in the school. 115.

The author provided no evidence that the D.C.S.s did have this effect, however, and none of the evidence produced by anthropologists who studied the behaviour of young people at work offered support to this view.[116] The success of one of the schemes main intentions must, therefore, be in some doubt.

Nevertheless, some of the pupils at the D.C.S.s appear to have developed a genuine interest in the scheme. The boys who attended Lees Street D.C.S. in Openshaw (mainly boys employed by the big engineering firm in the neighbourhood, Armstrong Whitworth) were engrossed in the work of the 'school' and even attended evening classes in engineering theory there.

115.Waterfall, op.cit., p.194.
116.Tenen, op.cit., passim; Wyatt, op.cit., passim.

'Life is very serious to these boys', Edith Waterfall was told:

> They want to get on. They desire to study the theory that lies behind their work in the shops, and they are voluntarily attending evening classes run by the Lees School in Magnetism and Electricity; Handicrafts; Heat; and Machine Drawing. Recreative classes do not appeal to them.117.

Here, then, is clear evidence that some teenage wage-earners from the working-class were intrinsically interested in their work and did not regard it simply as 'routine drudgery'.

The girls who attended Oldham Road D.C.S. were also sent there by their firm; in this case, Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee. The girls at this firm were employed on repetitive machine tasks and were,apparently, sent to the 'school' in order to experience a break from their work rather than to receive further vocational training like the boys who attended Lees Street D.C.S. Edith Waterfall visited the firm where these girls were employed and watched them at work:

> The girls are either engaged in cutting, machining or folding... handkerchiefs or on the looms. Their work is extremely monotonous and soon becomes automatic. After watching them in the handkerchief department it is impossible not to conclude that they have become living machines, and that their minds are free to traverse the

117.Waterfall, op.cit., p.196.

> universe while their bodies sway rhythmically and their hands perform all the necessary operations.118.

The curriculum at the D.C.S. these girls attended was partly aimed, therefore, at giving the girls a break from their work; there were singing classes, for instance, and reading classes, and the girls also did physical exercises.[119] But the curriculum was also geared towards preparing the girls for married life; they studied hygiene, for instance, and 'homecraft' and also needlework.[120]

Waterfall argued that, although the curriculum here was fundamentally different from the curriculum at the boys D.C.S. in Openshaw, this was perfectly in line with the wishes of the girls. But it is by no means certain that this was in fact the case since the author produced no evidence of what the girls themselves actually felt about the scheme. She assumed that all the girls in the mill simply wanted to get married at the earliest opportunity. She remarked curtly:

> The girls continue in the mills until they marry. This situation has determined the character of the school... vocational education in the school has no place... they are receiving a general education; training for leisure; and training for citizenship ...

and, she should have added, training for marriage.[121]

118.ibid.
119.id., p.197.
120.ibid.
121.ibid.

Hulme D.C.S. was unlike both of the D.C.S.s discussed so far in that it was intended for boys and girls. It was also different in that it attracted pupils of widely differing abilities and boys and girls from very different backgrounds. Some of the boys who attended this D.C.S. had been educated at Manchester Grammar School; others were described by Waterfall as 'mentally subnormal'.[122] All of this meant that the 'pupils' at the 'school' required different types of instruction. A number of boys wanted further technical training; whereas others wanted a curriculum more geared towards hobbies.[123] A compromise arrangement seems to have prevailed and E.Hulton and Co. Ltd., the printing and publishing firm which sent its boy and girl employees to the 'school', were certainly satisfied with the scheme. It was pointed out in the firm's staff journal, The Mat Box, in July 1922, for instance, that the 'headmaster' at the 'school' and his assistant:

> have made a tour through our works in order to become cognizant of the class of work undertaken by our juniors, and endeavour will be made to impart tuition especially suited to the departmental work of the scholar.124.

A second article in the firm's journal, in August 1922, discussed the curriculum at the 'school'. Boys and girls at the firm attended the 'school' on the same day and even

122. id., p.198. The same was noted of D.C.S.pupils in Bristol and Coventry. See id., pp.87-8.
123. ibid.
124. The Mat Box, the staff magazine of E.Hulton and Co., Ltd., July 1922 quoted in Waterfall, op.cit., p.200.

studied the same or similar subjects: mathematics and book-keeping (the girls studied 'domestic arithmetic' and book-keeping); physical exercises; english; and there was a special emphasis on hobbies:

> The idea is held here that every boy and girl is all the better for having a hobby,

the authors of the staff journal pointed out:

> and so one hour every day is called the 'Hobby Hour'.125.

During this hour, the girls, as well as the boys, were taught wood-carving. In addition ,the girls were taught embroidery and fancy needlework and the boys were taught light woodwork. The staff at Hulton's were extremely satisfied with the scheme, declaring:

> There is a delightful freedom about the place which all the boys and girls who are in attendance appreciate. 126.

Such praise led Edith Waterfall to single out the Manchester D.C.S. scheme as one which was fulfilling the original purpose of the experiment. The function of the D.C.S., she believed, was 'to supply the educational needs of adolescent workers, and in so doing to enrich the community in good citizens and workers' and she felt that Manchester's D.C.S.s were 'performing

125.id., p.201.
126.id., pp.201-2.

this function admirably'.[127]

Nevertheless, Manchester's D.C.S.s did experience some problems in the inter-war period. There was always a shortage of teachers, for instance.[128] Moreover, as W.E. Taylor pointed out in a local Church magazine in 1946, the buildings in which the classes were held - invariably either a disused elementary school building or a building which was used as a Sunday School at weekends - were quite unsuitable for young wage-earners who no longer wished to be regarded as schoolchildren.[129] In some areas - notably Kent, West Sussex and West Ham - D.C.S.s had been given impressive-sounding names like 'Institutes' and the Lever Brothers' Soap Manufacturing firm at Port Sunlight in Cheshire had christened its works school for its adolescent employees 'The Staff Training College'.[130] But no such efforts were undertaken in Manchester before the Second World War and, as a consequence, the Manchester D.C.S.s appear to have experienced low attendances in the inter-war period.[131]

The attendance rate at D.C.S.s was affected by other factors, of course, and most notably by the fluctuations in the trade cycle. When an employer ran into difficulties

127. id., pp.202-3.
128. M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., p.114; Taylor, op.cit., p.190.
129. id., p.192.
130. Waterfall, op.cit. p.105.
131. See, for instance, the Grey Mare Lane D.C.S., Log Book, op.cit., passim; M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., pp.28, 114; M.E.C., Education, op.cit., p.77; Taylor, op.cit., pp.190-192. Taylor points out that D.C.S.s in and around Manchester were being re-christened 'County Colleges' in 1946 (id., p.193).

he frequently simply withdrew his adolescent workers from the scheme. The log book of one local D.C.S., the Grey Mare Lane D.C.S. in Openshaw, provides ample evidence of this over the period from 1923 to 1937. The entry for 26 October 1923 records, for instance, how:

> The Belsize Motors Ltd. have discontinued sending their apprentices to School on account of trade depression in the Industry... The number of boys withdrawn is 40. 132.

The entry for 25 April 1925 reads:

> The attendance during the last few weeks has been much below the normal on account of Armstrong Whitworth requiring their apprentices in certain departments to remain at work. This is likely to continue for a few weeks. 133.

But the attendance rate at this D.C.S. appears to have entered a progressive decline from April 1925 onwards. Only 156 boys were in attendance on 12 June 1925, the first day of the new term; 183 should have been present. At the close of the summer term in 1926 only 104 boys were in attendance. The attendance rate over the next three years was described as 'moderate' (on the first day of the autumn term in 1928); 'fair' (on the first day of the lent term in 1929) and 'only a fair attendance' (on the first day of the autumn term in 1929). Owing to the low attendance rate, it was decided to reduce the number of

132. Grey Mare Lane D.C.S., Log Book, op.cit., 26 October 1923.
133. id., 25 April 1925.

classes to one in September 1930 and by October of 1930 the school was only opening on three days of the week instead of the earlier five. From April 1931, 'owing to depleted numbers', the school began to open for only two days each week and on 6 September 1932 only two boys were present. From September 1932, the school was only opening on Mondays and subsequent attendances never reached the levels which they had reached in the early 1920s. Only 11 apprentices were in attendance on the first day of the autumn term in 1936 and they were sent by only three firms in the district: the Renold and Coventry Chain Company sent 8 apprentices; West's Gas Improvement Company sent 2 apprentices and Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee sent only 1 apprentice. Only 21 apprentices were in attendance at the school in January 1937 and all of these were from the three firms referred to above. Finally, on the last date for which an attendance figure is given, 24 May 1937, only 22 apprentices were in attendance.[134]

It should not be assumed that only the larger firms sent their apprentices to D.C.S.s in the city. Around 260 local firms sent at least one apprentice to an educational class either at one of the D.C.S.s or at the College of Technology in Manchester in 1935.[135] It was the case, however, that moderately-sized firms in the city could only afford to send a limited number of their junior employees to D.C.S.s

134. id., passim.
135. Ferguson and Abbott, op.cit., p.60.

during working hours; 152 of the 260 firms mentioned above, for instance, could only afford to send one apprentice to a D.C.S. during working hours in 1935.[136] The larger firms, on the other hand, sent up to 200 apprentices a week to D.C.S.s during working hours and 7 firms in the city sent between 50 and 200 apprentices a week to D.C.S.s during working hours in 1935.[137]

Nevertheless, the fact that 260 firms in the city sent at least one of their adolescent workers to a D.C.S. in 1935 is indicative of why so many local employers supported the scheme. By participating in the scheme a firm could establish a good reputation for producing highly skilled craftsmen. This was particularly important in the case of smaller firms which could not afford to build works schools for their adolescent employees yet still wanted to attract apprentices of the highest standard to their firms. The Manchester scheme thus appears to have received the support of employers from a variety of firms. Three local firms - an engineering firm, a textile firm and a co-operative society - each sent over 200 of their adolescent employees to a D.C.S. during working hours in 1935. But another 75 local engineering firms, 30 printing firms, 12 building and joinery firms, 8 plumbing firms, 7 rubber manufacturers, 4 grocers, 3 employers engaged in road construction, 2 Corporation departments and one newspaper sent one of their adolescent workers to a D.C.S. during

136. ibid.
137. ibid.

working hours in 1935.[138]

D.C.S.s in Manchester were, then, popular with many different types of employer. But it still needs to be emphasised that not all local employers participated in the scheme and those that did frequently withdrew their adolescent workers from the scheme during periods when there was a depression in the trade.[139] This implies that even local employers, then, - who were praised for their farsightedness by educationalists - did not regard the D.C.S.s as indispensable to the training of their young workers.[140] Doubtless some of the employers who did participate in the scheme regarded it, primarily, as a useful means of improving the prestige of the firm and a good way of attracting adolescent workers of a high quality in the next generation. Engineering firms such as Armstrong Whitworth, who sent their boy apprentices to Lees Street D.C.S. to learn the theory behind their work in the shops, probably held this view. Other employers like E.Hulton and Co. Ltd. seem to have regarded the scheme as a refreshing break from work for their boy and girl employees.[141] But local employers as a group do not appear to have been entirely convinced of the intrinsic benefits of the scheme.

138. ibid.
139. See Grey Mare Lane D.C.S., Log Book, op.cit., 26 October 1923; id., 7 January 1924; id., 25 April 1924; id., 25 April 1927; M.E.C., General Survey, op.cit., pp.28, 112, 114; M.E.C., Education, op.cit., p.77.
140. Waterfall, for instance, praised Manchester employers for supporting D.C.S.s. See Waterfall, op.cit., p.193.
141. See above, pp. 123-4, 127.

Mather and Platt's engineering firm in Newton Heath and the British Westinghouse (later Metro-Vicks)engineering firm in Trafford Park set up their own works schools as an alternative to the D.C.S.s run by M.E.C., but these were reserved exclusively for boy apprentices at the firm and the former firm treated their apprentices almost as a separate class from the rest of the teenage workforce. Nevertheless, this firm did provide a variety of social facilities for its other adolescent employees and the employers at the firm certainly regarded themselves as important providers of leisure facilities, not just for their adolescent workers, but for their adult workforce as well.[142]

Few of the printed sources on D.C.S.s and works schools indicate what young workers felt about such schemes. It seems certain that the apprentices who attended the Lees Street D.C.S. in Openshaw developed a genuine interest in the classes since they also gave up their free time in the evenings to attend the school despite being under no obligation to.[143] Walter Greenwood also found that the engineering apprentice he interviewed for his study How The Other Man Lives (1939?) attended a technical class voluntarily in the evenings and learnt how to repair the machinery in his own engineering shop. He told Greenwood:

142.See above pp. 118-120; Our Journal, op.cit., pp.46-50, 52, 61, 67 71, 72.
143.Waterfall, op.cit., p.196.

> Yes, I like what I'm learning now; it makes the work more interesting in the shop. They [the foreman and maintenance engineer at his works] let me try my hand at repairing one of the lathes that broke down... I made it go again.

This apprentice was also able to use the knowledge he acquired in the evening class to repair motor cars in his spare time and to make models on the lathe he had set up in a shed at home. In addition, he firmly believed that by attending technical classes in the evenings he improved his future employment prospects. He told Greenwood:

> The engineer at the technical school says that there's nothing to stop me from getting letters after my name... That's what I'd like.

He hoped eventually to be given a job in an airplane factory or with a firm of constructional engineers.[144]

Whether the apprentice Greenwood interviewed represented the views of most apprentices towards works schools and technical classes is difficult to say. The apprentices at Lees Street D.C.S. in Manchester, as we have said, found such schemes rewarding presumably because they complemented their work in the workshop and perhaps because they were able to use the knowledge and skills they acquired in the classes to pursue hobbies related to their work. The only thing which can be said is that

144.Greenwood, Other Man, op.cit., pp.119-120.

not all trade apprentices were keen on the classes and not all trade apprentices were sent to such classes. Greenwood's case-study illustrates the first point. Only about six boys at the firm Greenwood's apprentice worked for attended technical classes in the evenings: 'a lot more started with us when we first began', he told the reader, 'but most of them stopped going. Some of them started going out with girls... to dances and the pictures'.[145] The second point is given credence by a local case-study. Frank Wightman, who served his apprenticeship at a firm of millwrights in Gorton during the 1920s, recalled never having attended an evening class throughout his five year training.[146] Joan L.Harley, who interviewed 169 working girls employed in a variety of trades in Manchester in 1935, found that:

> The direct appeal of evening schools and clubs is not a wide one: apart from the office workers and the few girls who have some active interest to pursue, evening classes may be said to have no appeal at all. 147.

The D.C.S.'s, works schools and technical classes that were set up in Manchester were intended mainly, it seems, for boy apprentices; but even among this group of young workers there were those whom the schools failed to attract for any length of time.

145.id., p.120.
146.M.E.N., 6 December 1976.
147.Harley, op.cit., p.2.

What, then, of the relationship between young workers and their employers? Were young workers in Manchester deferential towards their employers in the 1920s and 1930s? Were works schools and D.C.S.s effective mechanisms for turning them into deferential and loyal young workers firmly committed to a particular employer? The remainder of this chapter will consider, firstly, the engineering apprentices of inter-war Manchester and their attitude towards their employers and towards their work. And, secondly, it will consider the girl factory worker's attitude towards her employer and towards her work.

As this chapter has already shown, employers in the local engineering industry cultivated a special relationship with their male apprentices. Big engineering firms like Mather and Platt set up works schools for this group of young workers and, as a result, the relationship between an engineering employer and his male apprentices was probably stronger than his relationship with the rest of his workforce.[148] This relationship broke down, though, on one occasion in the inter-war period. On 6 September 1937, 40 apprentices at an engineering workshop in Salford (Larmuth and Bulmers in Unwin Street) went on strike in an effort to secure a 3s pay rise which had been awarded to the adult workers at the firm.[149] Two

148. See above, pp. 118-119; see also note 46 of the present chapter.
149. M.E.N., 8 September 1937; M.G., 9 September 1937. For a brief account of the Manchester and Salford engineering apprentices' strike of 1937 see Frow and Frow, op.cit., p.32. I am grateful to the Frows for letting me see important material on the strike at their Working-Class Movement Library, 111 King's Road, Manchester. For reasons of space this material has not been incorporated into the following brief analysis of the strike because it is not really relevant to the argument. All of the newspapers referred to below were read in M.C.R.L., Social Sciences Library.

weeks later over 13,000 engineering apprentices in Salford, Manchester and the surrounding districts were also on strike, essentially, over the low wages they felt they received for doing work which they felt was highly skilled.[150] The following discussion of the evolution and outcome of the Manchester and Salford apprentices' strike in September 1937 will hopefully illustrate two things. Firstly, it aims to show that local apprentices were intrinsically interested in their work, so much so in fact that the majority of the participants were prepared to go without pay of any kind during the three-week long strike in a concerted effort to improve their working conditions. Secondly, it will suggest that the special relationship between so-called paternalistic employers in the local engineering industry and their male apprentices probably changed fundamentally as a direct consequence of the strike.

The engineering apprentices' strike which affected most engineering firms in Manchester, Salford and many firms in outlying dustricts in September 1937 was not the first large-scale strike organised by apprentices in Britain. What one contemporary described as 'the greatest youth strike movement the country has ever seen' occurred five months earlier on

150. M.E.N., 21 September 1937; M.G., 22 September 1937.

Clydeside.[151] Around 17,000 engineering and shipbuilding apprentices participated in this strike and a further 23,000 adults organised a one-day strike in support of the Clydeside apprentices' demand for a wage rise on 16 April 1937.[152] This dispute dragged on into early May of 1937 but the strike remained solid and employers on the Clyde were eventually forced to concede a wage rise to the apprentices amounting to between 1s and 2s.[153]

There were other apprentice strikes, too, throughout Britain in 1937. There was one in Edinburgh in the spring which lasted over two weeks; apprentices went on strike in Stockton and in Lincoln in May 1937 and there was an apprentices' strike in Aberdeen in May and June which lasted over three weeks.[154] Only the Manchester apprentices' strike, however, was on the same scale as the Clydeside apprentices' revolt, in terms of the numbers involved. Surprisingly, though,

151. J.Gollan, Youth in British Industry: A survey of labour conditions to-day, London 1937, p.311. For the only detailed analyses of the Clydeside apprentices' strike of 1937, see R.Croucher, Engineers at War 1939-1945, London 1982, pp.49-53 and A.McKinlay, 'From Industrial Serf to Wage-Labourer: The 1937 Apprentice Revolt In Britain', I.R.S.H., Vol.XXXI, 1986, Part I, pp.1-18.
152. id., p.14.
153. id., pp.7, 8, 14, 15.
154. Croucher, op.cit., p.53.

the Manchester strike has been ignored by the one historian who has discussed in some detail the 1937 apprentice revolt in Britain. Alan McKinlay, in an article misleadingly entitled 'From Industrial Serf To Wage-Labourer: The 1937 Apprentice Revolt In Britain', only considers the Clydeside apprentices' strike. Furthermore, he seems to regard the apprentices' strikes in England in September 1937 as simply pale imitations of the apprentices'strike on the Clyde, declaring towards the end of his article:

> In September 1937... a second wave of strikes... swept through the main English engineering centres. The English boys failed to generate the cohesive organisation characteristic of the Clyde strike.155

The following account of the apprentices' strikes in Manchester, Salford and the surrounding districts will suggest that, on the contrary, the local apprentices' strike was extremely well-organised.

Like the Clyde apprentices' strike earlier in the year, the Manchester apprentices' strike was essentially a strike over the low wages engineering and shipbuilding apprentices locally were paid. The wage differentials between engineering apprentices and other young workers, particularly those employed in transport, were very considerable in the mid-1930s.[156] According to a comprehensive survey of young

155.McKinlay, op.cit., p.16. Croucher only skates over the Manchester apprentices' strike, see Croucher, op.cit., p.54.
156.See Table 5 in the Appendix.

people's wages undertaken by the Ministry of Labour, the average weekly wage of boy apprentices in General Engineering, in October 1935, was only 21s; but boys who worked on trams earned 31s 9d a week.[157] In certain branches of the engineering industry boy apprentices earned less than 21s a week; apprentices who built locomotives earned only 17s 3d a week in the mid-1930s.[158] In short, apprentices in the engineering industry were among the lowest paid young industrial workers in the mid-1930s.

One trade union official in the engineering industry was genuinely worried that fewer boys were entering apprenticeships in the industry in the mid-1930s, owing to the low wages paid. W.F. Watson, a skilled mechanic and a branch secretary in the Amalgamated Engineering Union (A.E.U.), wrote in January 1936:

> Can one expect youths who have been reared in an atmosphere of cinemas... and dance-halls... to go to the trouble of learning a craft and entering an industry which will return to them a very precarious £3 a week ? 159

John Gollan, the 25 year-old Secretary of the Young Communist League who had served an apprenticeship in the engineering

157. ibid.
158. ibid.
159. See W.F.Watson, 'Is There a Shortage of Skilled Craftsmen?', H.F., Vol.X, No.1, January 1936, p.32.

industry, endorsed this view. According to him, 'the mass of [engineering] apprentices in Britain' received a mere 8s to 12s a week in their first year (i.e. at 16) and only 16s to 20s in their final year (i.e. at 21). 'Can it be wondered at', Gollan wrote in 1937, 'that boys of 23 years object to being paid a pound a week for doing the finest skilled job?'[160]

Engineering apprentices in Manchester and Salford were paid slightly more than Gollan estimated for engineering apprentices throughout Britain. In September 1937, a 16 year-old engineering apprentice locally earned 14s 6d a week and a 20 year-old apprentice earned 22s.[161] Doubtless local apprentices felt aggrieved at earning such low wages before September 1937 but what brought this grievance to the surface was the fact that adult engineers locally received a 3s wage rise in September 1937 and apprentices in the industry received nothing.

The local strike began at a small engineering workshop in Salford on 6 September, when the 40 boy apprentices at the firm walked out demanding the 3s wage rise that had been awarded to the adult engineers at the firm.[162] Immediately, these apprentices tried to establish contact with apprentices at other firms in the neighbourhood to persuade them to join

160.Gollan, op.cit., p.312.
161.Quoted in M.G., 9 September 1937.
162.M.E.N., 8 September 1937; M.G., 9 September 1937.

the strike. 'Throughout the day', a M.E.N. reporter wrote on 8 September, 'oily-faced lads in overalls have pedalled their bicycles along Salford side-streets from one rallying-point to another'.[163] Messages like 'Support the Apprentice Strike' had also apparently been scrawled onto walls throughout the city with chalk.[164] One of the strikers was interviewed by a M.E.N. reporter on 8 September and he outlined very clearly what the strike was about. 'Recently in one shop', he pointed out:

> senior workers were given a 3s a week rise. Apprentices have not been included in that increase. The wage for 20 year old apprentices is 22s. We think it should be 25s. 165

At this stage, around 100 apprentices from four local firms were on strike demanding a 3s wage rise.[166] But by 13 September almost 1,000 were.[167] 800 apprentices at a big engineering firm in Patricroft joined the strike on 13 September. They demanded not only a wage rise but also holidays with pay.[168]

At this point, apprentices from a number of big engineering firms joined the strike: 250 boys from the Metropolitan Vickers (formerly British Westinghouse) engineering firm in Trafford Park; 180 boys from Ferranti's two plants in

163. M.E.N., 8 September 1937.
164. ibid.
165. ibid.
166. ibid; M.G., 9 September 1937.
167. M.E.N., 13 September 1937.
168. ibid.

Moston and Hollinwood; 200 boys from the Lancashire Dynamo and Crypto Ltd. engineering firm in Trafford Park; 700 boys from A.V.Roe's aircraft factory in Newton Heath and apprentices from a host of other firms including paternalistic firms like Mather and Platt and Beyer Peacock.[169] 60 girls at one Salford engineering firm even came out on strike in support of the apprentices on 16 September.[170] By this date, over 5,000 local apprentices were out on strike according to the M.G. and around 7,000 according to the M.E.N.[171]

In an attempt to unify those out on strike a small group of apprentices set up a strike committee on 16 September. The degree of unity this body managed to impose on a strike which eventually enveloped the whole of Greater Manchester and beyond was extremely impressive. It produced leaflets to try and persuade apprentices at big engineering firms who remained at work to join the strike; it arranged mass meetings in Trafford Park which were attended by apprentices from as far afield as Miles Platting and Droylsden; it published a Strike Bulletin which was sold for ½d a copy at the mass meetings and it negotiated with trade union officials who acted as intermediaries between the employers on the one hand and the apprentices

169. M.E.N., 16 September 1937; id., 17 September 1937; M.G., 17 September 1937; id., 18 September 1937.
170. M.E.N., 17 September 1937.
171. M.G., 16 September 1937; M.E.N., 16 September 1937. The strike was even mentioned in The Times on 16 September 1937.

on the other.[172] When Manchester District Engineering Employers' Federation were eventually forced to offer the apprentices a 2s wage rise, because of the havoc the strike was causing to the industry, the apprentices' strike committee, knowing that they had the upper hand, even contemplated remaining out on strike for the full 3s wage rise and as a protest against the suspension of four boy employees at Ferranti's for participating in the strike.[173] In short, the apprentices' strike committee provided strong leadership throughout the three week long dispute and though they finally did accept the offer of a 2s wage rise on behalf of the 13,000 engineering apprentices of Manchester, Salford and district who had participated in the strike, this decision was still a clear victory for the apprentices.

The local apprentices' strike in 1937 is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is a clear illustration that young workers were not simply deferential and submissive towards their employers in the inter-war period as Elizabeth Roberts has argued. All of the so-called paternalistic employers locally were directly affected by the apprentices' strike action: Mather and Platt's,Metro-Vicks, Beyer Peacock's and so on. Secondly, the 13,000 apprentices who were prepared to

172. M.E.N., 16 September 1937; D.W., 16 September 1937; M.G., 17 September 1937; id., 18 September 1937; id., 20 September 1937; id., 25 September 1937.
173. M.E.N., 7 October 1937; id., 8 October 1937; M.G., 2 October 1937. On the havoc the strike caused to production targets see M.G., 17 September 1937; id., 22 September 1937; M.E.N. 17 September 1937; D.W., 16 September 1937; id., 30 September 1937; D.H., 18 September 1937; id., 20 September 1937; D.E., 17 September 1937.

go on strike for up to three weeks without receiving any pay were clearly intrinsically interested in their work. In other words, they were more work-orientated than the historian of 'working-class youth', Stephen Humphries, has given credit for. These apprentices did not regard their work as 'routine drudgery'; they felt they were doing skilled work for which they deserved higher wages. In fact, from the very beginning of the strike they were anxious to present their request for a wage rise as 'correct and just'.[174] Furthermore, the evidence presented earlier in this chapter on works schools and D.C.S.s for apprentices clearly showed that trade apprentices were genuinely interested in their work, some even pursuing subjects related to their work in their free time.[175]

What, finally, did other young workers feel about their work and about their employers? Fortunately, a researcher at Manchester University found out about these issues for her M.Ed. thesis which was submitted in 1937 and the research for which was accumulated in the mid-1930s. Joan L.Harley asked 169 working girls of Manchester to complete a questionnaire on a range of topics, including their attitude towards their work, and she subsequently interviewed a number of the girls who spoke at greater length about their work and about their employers. The girls were all aged between 14½ and 19 and her sample included white-collar workers as well as manual

174. M.G., 9 September 1937.
175. See above pp.98-99, 123-124.

workers. Harley seemed genuinely surprised to find that the majority of the girls in her sample found their work 'interesting'; even those whose occupations appeared to her to be 'rather dull and unattractive'.[176] The office workers who featured in her study gave a variety of reasons for liking their work 'ranging from interest in the goods dealt with by their firms to gratitude for being allowed a long lunch hour'.[177] Many girls who were employed as machinists in Manchester's sewing trades told Harley that they liked their jobs because they were interested in clothes and fashions.[178] A number stated that they liked finding out about new styles before they were put on sale in the shops.[179] Others employed in the sewing trade said that they liked the work because it taught them how to make their own clothes.[180]

Harley spoke to other girls who liked their work because it was lively. A girl who was employed as a boxmaker told her:

> I like my work because you are always on the go. It is very quick. 181.

Another girl who worked in a warehouse derived satisfaction from her work for the same reason. 'My work', she told Harley,

176.Harley, op.cit., p.46.
177.id., p.47.
178.ibid.
179.ibid.
180.ibid.
181.id., p.48.

> is to go to the stockroom with mistakes. When busy I do more running about than work and I like the walking about. 182.

Very few of the girls featured in Harley's study derived no satisfaction from their work. Those that did dislike their jobs tended to be girls who worked alone and who were isolated from the rest of their age-group such as domestic servants.[183] But for the vast majority work, even when it was not intrinsically interesting, was still enjoyable in some way. Most girls in Manchester worked either in a factory or in a workshop and as Harley pointed out these establishments were attractive to girls partly because of the social contacts they provided. 'There is no doubt', Harley wrote,

> that many of the girls regard their workroom as a kind of club. Nearly all of them like their workmates... Very often their best friend of the moment is the girl who sits next to them at work.184

To conclude, then, it appears that young wage-earners from the working-class were far more interested in their work than either contemporaries like Harley believed could be possible in so-called 'blind-alley' jobs,or historians since have given credit for. The enjoyment young wage-earners derived from work was not just related to the degree of skill involved

182. ibid.
183. id., p.49.
184. id., pp.45-46. Springhall makes the same point about factory work for girls before 1914. See Springhall, Coming of Age, op.cit., pp.90-91.

in the work they performed,as commentators like Harley mistakenly believed. It was also to do with the relationships and social contacts work made possible: in short, to the companionship work offered girls and boys. Proof that companionship was as crucial to some young workers as the type of work they did was provided both by Harley herself and by unemployed young people who were interviewed in the 1930s.[185] What they tended to miss most about work was the social life and the social contacts it made possible.[186] Whether youth unemployment was a 'problem' in Manchester in the 1920s and 1930s will be considered in the next chapter, Chapter 3.

185. Harley, op.cit., pp.45-46. See also C.Cameron, A.Lush and G.Meara, Disinherited Youth: A Survey, 1936-1939, Edinburgh 1943, pp.67, 69.
186. ibid.

CHAPTER 3: '(A)N ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEM OF ALARMING PROPORTIONS'?: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN INTER-WAR MANCHESTER.

> One of the most pernicious and socially disturbing aspects of British unemployment between the wars was the enforced idleness suffered by thousands of youngsters under the age of 18. With ambitions quashed and its independence and morale noticeably weakened, the army of unemployed youth represented an economic and social problem of alarming proportions...

Thus did the economic historian W.R.Garside depict the scale and seriousness of the youth unemployment 'problem' in inter-war Britain in his pioneering article on the subject.[1] In this article, Garside mentioned five cities where youth unemployment, according to him, reached serious levels in this period and Manchester was one of these.[2] This chapter will draw on a range of sources not used by Garside and will attempt to determine whether his assessment was correct.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will look at the scale and nature of youth unemployment in the city in the 1920s and 1930s. This section will look in some detail at the length of time 14 to 18 year olds

1. W.R.Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment and Public Policy between the Wars', Ec.H.R., Second Ser., Vol.XXX,No.2, May 1977, pp.322-339 (322).
2. id., p.332. The other four were: Liverpool, Glasgow, Bristol and Newcastle.

locally were unemployed; an issue which Garside says little about. The second section focuses on the state schemes and voluntary schemes for unemployed 14 to 18 year olds and the thinking behind them.The third section will examine whether bouts of unemployment affected local teenage wage-earners in any way. Did periodic bouts of unemployment, for instance, demoralise 14-18 year olds in cities like Manchester, as Garside seems to imply ? Did unemployment have any perceptible effect on the health of teenage boys and girls locally ? Was youth unemployment seen as a cause of juvenile crime locally and, finally, did unemployment affect the lifestyles of those teenage wage-earners locally who experienced it ? Did it, for instance, restrict access to commercialised entertainment such as cinemas and dance halls ? These are the questions which the third section will attempt to answer. The first task, however, is to indicate the extent and describe the nature of youth unemployment in the city in the 1920s and 1930s.

The unemployment rate amongst 14 to 18 year olds in Manchester in the '20s and '30s was significantly lower than the unemployment rate amongst this age-group in other major cities like Liverpool, Salford and Sheffield. In November 1927, when only 3.4% of the under 18s of Manchester were estimated to be unemployed, 17.5% of the under 18s of Liverpool were, 11.2% of the under 18s of Sheffield were, and 10.8% of the under 18s of Salford were. A year later, when 4.3% of the under 18s of Manchester were unemployed, 16.4% were in

Liverpool, 11.8% in Sheffield and 14.8% in Salford. This pattern of a low youth unemployment rate in Manchester compared with other major cities is also apparent in the depression year of 1931. In November of that year, only 7.7% of the under 18s of Manchester were unemployed but 20.4% of the under 18s of Liverpool were, 17.4% of the under 18s of Sheffield and 13.3% of the under 18s of Salford.[3]

It was argued in Chapter 1 that the under 18s of Manchester were also far less afflicted by unemployment than the under 18s in other parts of Lancashire. The unemployment rate amongst 'insured juveniles' (16 and 17 year olds) was only 5.2% in Manchester in the depression year of 1932. This was the lowest rate in the whole county with the exception of Lancaster where the unemployment rate amongst 16 and 17 year olds was 1% lower.[4] The favourable unemployment situation for the under 18s of Manchester, compared with the situation for other young people in the North-West and in other parts of the country, was reflected in the high migration rates among 14 to 18 year olds from the latter areas who, unable to find work in their own towns, were placed in employment in Manchester. The number of young migrants into Manchester increased quite significantly in the 1930s. In 1932-3, 262 boys and girls under 18 from outside Manchester (83 boys, 179 girls),

3.See below Table 6, Appendix for full details.
4.See above, p. 40.

were found jobs in Manchester. By the following year, this figure had more than doubled to 510 boys and girls under 18 and the latter figure had increased slightly to 513 boys and girls under 18 by 1935-6.[5] In the latter year the migrants included boys and girls from towns bordering on Manchester such as Altrincham, Ashton-under-Lyne and Glossop; but, also, a number of others who had travelled from as far afield as Jarrow, Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland in order to take up work in Manchester.[6] This level of migration into Manchester continued until the end of the decade. 615 boys and girls from outside the city were placed into employment locally in 1936-7, 603 in 1937-8 and 514 in 1938-9.[7] Only an infinitesimal number of local youngsters, by contrast, were found work in other towns and cities in the 1930s; the number placed into employment outside Manchester was always significantly lower than the number placed into employment in Manchester.[8] Furthermore, the policy of the local J.E.B.s was always to offer local youngsters jobs before placing young people from outside Manchester into employment locally.[9] Thus, the employment and unemployment situation for 14 to 18 year olds in Manchester was far more favourable than it was anywhere else in the

5.See above, p.39; Canner, op.cit., p.229.
6.See above, p.39.
7.Canner, op.cit., p.229.
8.ibid.
9.M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1935-6, p.16.

country in the 1920s and 1930s,with the possible exception of London.[10]

But this favourable situation for local youngsters is only the 'macro' picture. At a 'micro' level, it is quite clear that significant numbers of teenage boys and girls locally experienced bouts of unemployment even if,at any one time,they only constituted a tiny proportion of the whole age-group. This much is clear from two sources: the 1931 Census which gave the number of 14-20 year olds in the city who were 'out of work' on 27 April 1931 and the local J.E.B.'s annual reports which gave some indication of the number of 14 to 18 year olds in the city who experienced bouts of unemployment. Both sources provide useful information on the number of boys who were unemployed compared with the number of girls, the occupational backgrounds of the young unemployed and the latter source provides invaluable information on the age-groups that experienced unemployment and, most importantly, on the length of time teenage boys and girls were unemployed.

The 1931 Census statistics on the young unemployed of Manchester, reproduced in Tables 7 and 8 in the Appendix, indicate that although the unemployment rate among 14-20 year

10.Table 6, Appendix for the unemployment rate amongst the under 18s of London between 1927 and 1936.

old girls in the city on 27 April 1931 was not high (only 6.4% of all the girls in the workforce were 'out of work' on that day), a significant number of girls were 'out of work'; 2,579 girls, in fact. Twice as many boys were unemployed on the same day; 4,851 boys in all or 12.4% of the male labour force under the age of 21.[11]

The statistics cited above were obtained by census investigators who visited every household in Manchester in April 1931 and collected information on the employment circumstances of every member of each household. These statistics provide the only absolutely accurate account of the true extent of youth unemployment in the city on one particular day during the inter-war period because they include all 14-20 year olds who were out of work on 27 April 1931, regardless of whether they were claiming unemployment benefit.[12] The unemployment statistics which the J.E.B.s produced, on the other hand, only included the 'juveniles' who were on their registers; 14 and 15 year olds were particularly underrepresented in their figures because they were not obliged to register themselves as unemployed before 1934 and had no incentive to do so since they were not entitled to unemployment benefit.[13] The J.E.B. statistics, therefore, only really reflect the unemployment rate among 16 and 17 year olds.

11. See below Tables 7 and 8, Appendix.
12. Census of England and Wales 1931, Occupation Tables, op.cit., pp.iv, vi, vii.
13. See above, p.16.

The 1931 Census statistics reveal much about the young unemployed of Manchester. They show quite clearly, for instance, that the 14-20 year olds who were unemployed on 27 April 1931 were from a variety of trades and that white-collar workers were just as affected by unemployment as blue-collar workers.[14] The 2,579 girls who were unemployed on the above date, for example, included 211 unemployed 'Clerks and Typists' and 226 girls who had previously worked in 'Commerce, Finance and Insurance'. Around a fifth of all the girls who were 'out of work' in the city in April 1931, therefore, were white-collar workers. Surprisingly, only 484 'Textile Goods Workers' were 'out of work', which was an infinitesimal number compared with the number of girls in this occupation who were in employment. Other girls who were experiencing unemployment locally in April 1931 included 289 'Textile Workers'; 281 girls who had previously been in 'Personal Service'; 260 'Labourers and Unskilled Factory Workers'; 187 'Storekeepers and Packers' and 85 'Paper and Cardboard Makers and Workers'. The most interesting statistic, however, is that only 34 girls out of 1,084 who worked in 'Transport and Communication', the classic 'blind-alley' occupation according to the critics, were unemployed. Many critics assumed that on reaching the age of 16 or 18 juvenile workers in this occupation would find themselves out of work, but this does not appear to have been the

14. Tables 7 and 8, Appendix for the following details.

case either among girls or among boys in the aboveoccupation, a number of whom were between the ages of 18 and 21.[15] Summarising the statistics relating to girls specifically, it seems clear that the girls who were most afflicted by unemployment in Manchester in April 1931 were: clerical workers, who comprised around 20% of all the girls who were unemployed; textile goods workers, who comprised another 20%; textile workers, around 10% and girls who had previously been in 'Personal Service' (another 10%).[16]

An interesting and unexpected pattern also emerges in the case of boys. The authors of the 1931 Census and other academic commentators at the time, viewed 'Metal Workers' and boys employed in other specialised trades such as Precious Metals or Joinery as the elite of the teenage manual workforce.[17] It was assumed that boys who received a recognised period of training such as an apprenticeship lasting 5-7 years were unlikely to experience unemployment during that time and in this respect they were set apart from boys who went from

15. Those who argued that, on reaching 16 or 18, juveniles who worked in Transport and Communication or any so-called 'blind-alley' occupation would inevitably find themselves unemployed included Jewkes and Winterbottom, op.cit., pp.14-15, 28-35, 43; Jewkes and Jewkes, op.cit., pp.31, 42-46 and Griffith and Joseph, op.cit., p.115. For proof that this was simply not the case in Manchester, see Census of England and Wales 1931, Occupation Tables, Table 18. This Table reveals the following about so-called 'blind-alley' occupations locally. The 1,084 girls under 21 classified as 'Transport and Communication Workers included 179 between the ages of 18 and 21 and 256 between the ages of 16 and 18. Only 34 girls between the ages of 14 and 21 were 'out of work' on the day of the Census. Among the boys in the above occupation (4,683 in all), 497 were between 18 and 21 and 1,316 were between 16 and 18. Only 368 boys between 14 and 21 were 'out of work' on the day of the Census.
16. Table 7, Appendix.
17. Census, 1931, Classification of Occupations, London 1934, p.ii.

one job to another like 'industrial nomads', in the words of the two Liverpool University Settlement critics mentioned in Chapter 1. The Census statistics relating to Manchester show, however, that this was not the case. Nearly a thousand boy 'Metal Workers' in the city were 'out of work' on 27 April 1931; one fifth of all the boy 'Metal Workers' in the city, in fact.[18] In addition, over 900 (927) boy 'Labourers and Unskilled Factory Workers' were 'out of work' in the city on the above date; about a quarter of the boy 'Labourers and Unskilled Factory Workers' in the city.[19]

Boys who normally worked in white-collar jobs in the city were also significantly affected by unemployment in April 1931; over 600 boy 'Clerks' and boys who normally worked in 'Commerce, Finance and Insurance' were unemployed on 27 April 1931.[20] Interestingly, half as many boys who normally worked in 'Transport and Communication' were unemployed on the above date and the number of unemployed boys who normally worked in 'Road Transport' was also low compared with the number who were in employment. In the former occupation, 368 boys were 'out of work' on 27 April 1931 but 4,315 were in work; in the latter, 191 boys were 'out of work' but almost 2,000 were in work.[21]

18. Table 8, Appendix.
19. ibid.
20. ibid.
21. ibid.

Boys who were normally employed in the so-called 'blind-alley' occupations, therefore, were no more afflicted by unemployment than boys normally employed in clerical work or 'skilled' manual work, at least in Manchester.[22]

It would appear, therefore, that the distinction which was developed by academics at the time between so-called 'blind-alley' work which, it was thought, led directly to unemployment at 16 or 18 and 'progressive' employment which, it was felt, ensured a period of continuous employment at least to the age of 21, is not apparent in the unemployment statistics relating to the under-21 age-group in Manchester in April 1931. There is no way of knowing whether this distinction was more meaningful at other times during the inter-war period because in no other inter-war year was the actual number of 14-20 year olds in the city, along with their employment circumstances (ie.whether they were employed or unemployed) enumerated. The Census of 1921 only classified 'juveniles' as either 'occupied' or 'unoccupied' and those who were 'occupied' were not necessarily in work at the time; the authors of the Census felt that those who were out of work but who were looking for work were also 'occupied' in looking for work.[23] The Census of 1921,

22. Garside overlooks this and argues instead that those who were most exposed to unemployment were boys employed in so-called 'blind-alley' occupations. See Garside, 'Juvenile Unemployment', op.cit., pp.324, 335-6.
23. Census of England and Wales 1931, op.cit., pp.iv, vi, vii. See also A.M.Carr-Saunders, D.Caradog Jones and C.A.Moser, A Survey of Social Conditions In England And Wales, Oxford 1958, p.104 for clarification of the 'occupied' and 'unoccupied' in the Census tables.

therefore, can offer no insight into the extent of juvenile unemployment in the city in April 1921. It can easily be shown, however, that juvenile unemployment was not simply a problem in the city in the trough of the Depression.

That the level of juvenile unemployment in Manchester was regarded as a problem before 1931 can be demonstrated in two ways. Firstly, an examination of the unemployment insurance work of the local J.E.B.s can give some indication of the volume of juvenile unemployment in the city although, as mentioned earlier, the unemployment statistics produced by the J.E.B.s are not an accurate record of the number of 14-18 year olds who experienced unemployment at one time or another since not all 14-18 year olds registered themselves as unemployed. William McG.Eagar and Herbert Secretan believed that if all the 14 and 15 year olds who did not register themselves at the Exchanges were taken into account, the official statistics of juvenile unemployment would be between 50% and 100% greater than the statistics the J.E.B.s actually produced each month.[24] The J.E.B. statistics should only be treated as a rough guide, therefore, and it should be borne in mind that they undoubtedly underestimate the actual level of juvenile unemployment at any one time.

24. W.McG.Eagar and H.A.Secretan, Unemployment Among Boys, London 1925, p.28.

A more effective way of showing that youth unemployment was a problem in the city in the inter-war period is to demonstrate that measures were undertaken to cater for 14-18 year olds during the daytime. State sponsored schemes and voluntary schemes for unemployed youngsters, and for others who were working short-time, were introduced in depressed regions like North-East Lancashire and South Wales during this period.[25] But such schemes were not confined to these areas. In Manchester, which was not considered either a depressed area or a 'Special Area', a number of Juvenile Unemployment Centres (J.U.C.s) were opened by Manchester Education Committee in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour between December 1918 and February 1919 and day classes of this kind remained a permanent feature in the city throughout the 1920s and the 1930s.[26]

The official state scheme was entirely unique. The only organisations which had bothered to cater for the young unemployed of Manchester before December 1918 were voluntary organisations such as Lads' and Girls' Clubs which only provided instruction for their members or for former members.[27] Section Two of the present chapter will focus mainly on the work of the local J.U.C.s in the '20s and '30s because voluntary provision for unemployed 14-18 year olds locally was extremely

25. See, for instance, R.Pope, '"Dole Schools": The North-East Lancashire Experience, 1930-39', J.E.A.H., Volume IX, No.2, July 1977, pp.26-33; id., 'Education and the Young Unemployed: A Pre-War Experiment', J.F.H.E., Volume 2, No.2, Summer 1978, pp.15-20; G.Meara, Juvenile Unemployment in South Wales, Cardiff 1936; V.A.Bell, Junior Instruction Centres And Their Future: A Report to the Carnegie U.K.Trust, Edinburgh 1934 and W.Hannington The Problem of the Distressed Areas, London 1937, repr.Wakefield 1976, Chapter VI.
26. See below, pp.172-174.
27. Canner, op.cit., pp.12-21.

sporadic and very few unemployed 14-18 year olds locally received instruction in day classes set up by voluntary bodies. First, however, something more must be said about the volume of youth unemployment in the city in the 1920s and 1930s and this can best be evoked through an examination of the unemployment insurance work of the local J.E.B.s.

It is quite clear from the annual reports of Manchester's J.E.B.s that youth unemployment, on quite a large scale, first hit the city in the so-called 'transition' period from wartime economic conditions to peacetime economic conditions; that is, in the period from about December 1918 to July 1919. In this eight month period, 4,449 local teenage boys and girls (2,386 boys and 2,063 girls) 'signed on' at the local Bureaux in order to claim the Government's 'Out of Work Donation' and almost £8,600 was paid out in benefits to unemployed local youngsters.[28] The 'Out of Work Donation' was originally intended simply as a temporary measure to assist 15-18 year olds who had been employed on war work whilst they found alternative employment. But the Manchester scheme remained in operation for almost a year and from 1920 onwards, 16-18 year olds who found themselves unemployed could claim unemployment benefit providing they 'signed on' every day at their local J.E.B., if they lived within two miles of the

28. *id.*, p.64.

Bureau, and every other day if they lived between two and four miles from the Bureau.[29]

Officials at the local J.E.B.s complained about the fact that they had to administer the unemployment insurance scheme for 16-18 year olds from 1920 onwards, as well as find 14-18 year olds 'suitable' jobs.[30] Throughout the early 1920s, in fact, the placement work of the local Bureaux was pushed into the background and officials at the Bureaux were forced to concentrate on their unemployment insurance duties under the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920.[31] Officials at the Openshaw J.E.B. bore the brunt of this extra responsibility it seems: in April 1921, when nearly 5,000 under 18s locally were claiming unemployment benefit, over 2,000 of them were claiming benefit at the Openshaw Bureau.[32] A high proportion of the under 18s in the Gorton and Openshaw districts of the city worked in the engineering and cotton trades of the area which were particularly badly hit by the post-war depression in trade.[33]

The number of unemployed under 18s throughout the city began to fall during 1923, but the unemployment insurance work of the Bureaux held up placement work throughout 1923 and 1924.[34] Even so, the number of 16 and 17 year olds who

29. id., pp.63, 64, 90.
30. id, p.96.
31. ibid.
32. ibid.
33. ibid.
34. id., pp.96-7.

claimed unemployment benefit did not begin to increase again until 1930; but in the following year, 1931, it reached a post-war peak: 4,049 'fresh claims' for unemployment benefit were made at the local Bureaux in that year and a record £13,652 was paid out to the under 18s in unemployment benefit.[35] Trade in the city was described as 'very poor' in the local J.E.B.'s annual report for 1932 and,in December of that year, 3,200 local youngsters under 18 were registered as unemployed.[36]

Employment prospects for the under 18s locally improved, however, after 1932 partly due to the sharp decline in the number of boys and girls entering the labour market between 1933 and 1937 (a consequence of the progressive decline in the birth rate) but largely due to the revival of local industries and the increased demand for 'juvenile' labour. The Bureaux annual reports from 1933 onwards clearly illustrate this change. The local Bureaux were informed of more vacancies for 'juveniles' in these years than at any time in the past and in certain local industries and trades (Cotton and Clothing Manufacture, Engineering and Wireless Assembly, for instance), there were not enough 'juveniles' to fill the vacancies available.[37]

35. id., p.97.
36. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1932-33, pp.1-3.
37. id., Annual Report 1934-5, pp.6-7. See also Chapter 1 of this thesis pp.36-37.

It is not suggested, of course, that teenage workers in the city no longer experienced unemployment after 1932. The Bureaux statistics clearly indicate that a large number of 16 and 17 year olds claimed unemployment benefit even in a normal year like 1934; there were 2,554 'fresh claims' for unemployment benefit among 16 and 17 year olds in the above year, for instance.[38] Furthermore, the unemployment insurance work of the local Bureaux actually increased after 1934 because 14 and 15 year olds were brought within the scheme under the Unemployment Act of that year. Although teenage workers of 14 and 15 were still not entitled to claim unemployment benefit under the above Act, they were now required to register themselves at their local J.E.B. if they were unemployed and they were also obliged to attend one of the Junior Instruction Centres (J.I.C.s) for unemployed teenage workers daily.[39]

This increased the administrative work of the local Bureaux enormously. In 1935, for example, the staff at the Bureaux sent nearly 10,000 letters out to teenage workers who were understood to be unemployed but who had not registered at the Bureaux.[40] During a three-month period in 1936, 1,256 letters were sent out to teenage workers who were on

38. id., Annual Report 1933-4, pp.3-4.
39. id., Annual Report 1934-5, pp.4-5. The J.U.C.s were renamed J.I.C. on the recommendation of the Ministry of Labour, in September 1929. See Canner, op.cit., pp.110-11.
40. Canner, op.cit., p.99.

the unemployment registers but were not attending an Instruction Centre.[41] In a number of cases, recalcitrant 'teenagers' were brought before a Board of Assessors consisting of two or three members of the Juvenile Employment Committee (a Sub-Committee of Manchester Education Committee) and informed of their legal obligation to attend a day class.[42]

Meetings of the Board of Assessors were held once a month and the number of cases investigated each month varied from six to sixteen.[43] Invariably, legal proceedings were taken out on a number of teenage workers at each of these meetings. In the case of a young worker under the age of 16, this could mean a fine of up to 20s which his or her parents would be liable to pay after appearing in court. Young workers over 16 but under 17, however, could be summoned to appear in court themselves and risked forfeiting their unemployment benefit if they did not do so.[44] The threat of legal proceedings against young workers, or their parents, proved extremely effective in the long run. By 1938, only 36 cases of non-attendance at an Instruction Centre were investigated by the local Board of Assessors throughout the year and in only three cases

41. ibid.
42. ibid.
43. ibid.
44. id., p.171.

were legal proceedings against a teenage worker, or his parents, recommended.[45]

The officials who administered the unemployment insurance scheme for the under 18 age-group in Manchester were, then, clearly concerned about the issue of juvenile unemployment both in the 1920s and in the 1930s. In fact, measures were taken to provide unemployed young workers with instruction during the daytime even earlier than 1920. Between December 1918 and February 1919, M.E.C. opened three day centres for unemployed young workers in the city: one in Deansgate in the city centre; one in Openshaw and a third in Newton Heath.[46] Two of the centres ('Juvenile Unemployment Centre' was their official title) were housed in the same building as the local J.E.B. and the third was in an adjacent building.[47] They were set up to cater, primarily, for the large number of 15-18 year olds who claimed the Government's 'Out of Work Donation' between early December of 1918 and 25 July 1919 when all three centres temporarily closed. During this eight month period, 3,520 young workers (1,985 boys and 1,535 girls) attended these centres.[48]

45. id., p.179.
46. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1918-19, p.16 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.64.
47. id., p.65.
48. id., p.67.

The clientele at these early post-war centres was extremely mixed. Young workers from a range of occupations, both manual and non-manual, attended the centres. Among the boys there were unemployed boiler makers, unemployed carters, dyers and finishers, labourers, mill workers, warehouse workers and office boys. Among the girls who attended the centres there were unemployed machinists, unemployed mill workers, warehouse workers, wire weavers and unemployed office workers.[49] It is important to stress that not all the young workers that attended these centres were 'wholly unemployed'; a number were only 'partially unemployed' which meant that they were unemployed for at least three days a week and employed the rest of the time.[50]

This group were still entitled to the 'Out of Work Donation', however; and ,in order to qualify for this ,they and the 'wholly unemployed' group had to attend a centre every day that they were unemployed otherwise they would risk forfeiting their benefit. Another group of young workers who also experienced unemployment in the early post-war period were those who had been temporarily 'stopped' for a specified period; invariably, no more than two weeks.[51]

49. ibid.
50. id., p.65.
51. ibid.

The point which needs to be stressed, therefore, is that only a section of the young unemployed in the city in the early 1920s were actually without work; many, though, had jobs and were working short-time. Exactly how many of the young unemployed belonged to the latter category is unclear for the early 1920s,but statistical evidence is available for the later 1920s.

In 1928, one and a half times as many young workers who were working short-time were claiming unemployment benefit than young workers who were 'wholly unemployed'. The ratio of short-time workers to 'wholly unemployed' workers was unlikely to have been any different in the J.U.C.s since all those claiming benefit were obliged to attend a J.U.C.[52]

How long were young workers in inter-war Manchester unemployed ? The statistical evidence available on this issue is more substantial. The average stay of boys and girls who attended the Deansgate J.U.C. between December 1918 and April 1919 was only three and a half weeks.[53] Boys who were in attendance at the Newton Heath J.U.C. in the latter month were there, on average, for less than four weeks.[54] Girls who attended this J.U.C. in April 1919 were only there, on average, three weeks and at the Openshaw J.U.C. the average

52. id., p.97.
53. id., p.66.
54. ibid.

stay for boys and girls was less than five weeks.[55]

Teenage workers locally continued to experience unemployment at short-term intervals rather than long-term intervals after 1919. Boys who attended the Deansgate J.U.C. between June 1928 and December 1928, for instance, which catered for all the unemployed 16 and 17 year olds throughout the city at the time, were in attendance for less than four weeks, on average, and the girls who attended the centre during this period were there, on average, only three weeks.[56] When an official from the Ministry of Labour visited this centre, in October 1929, she was told that the personnel at the centre was 'continually changing' and in her subsequent report on the centre she pointed out that those who were attending the centre voluntarily (ie. 14 and 15 year olds) were finding clerical jobs 'rather quickly'.[57] When the same official visited the same centre the following year, in March 1930, a number of girls who were in attendance were working short-time in the local cotton industry and attending the centre in their 'play' week.[58] The Oldham Road J.I.C.,in Newton Heath,was set up specifically for short-time workers

55. ibid.
56. id., pp.109-10.
57. Public Record Office (P.R.O.), LAB 2/1078. Juvenile Unemployment Centres - Manchester Education Authority Centre at Byrom Street Course 1929-30, (typescript).
58. ibid.

in the district.[59]

It is quite certain, therefore, that a number of the young unemployed of Manchester, both during the 1920s and during the 1930s, were short-time workers rather than wholly unemployed workers although official statistics - whether those of the Ministry of Labour or the J.E.B.s - do not, unfortunately, separate the two.[60] What is also clear is that even wholly unemployed young workers, at least in Manchester, tended to experience short spells of unemployment lasting not longer than three to four weeks usually and not more than a few days by the mid-1930s. In April 1937, for instance, 60% of all the under 18s in the city who had been dismissed from their jobs in the previous three months had found employment within three days.[61] In view of this, it seems unlikely that unemployment had a catastrophic effect on the majority of teenage workers locally who experienced it, although, as indicated earlier, Garside has claimed that the under 18 age-group suffered greatly from unemployment.

What age-groups within the teenage age-range experienced short bouts of unemployment ? No single age-group

59. ibid.
60. The Ministry of Labour's Local Unemployment Index, for instance, which recorded the percentage rate of 'unemployment' among 14 to 18 year olds each month between January 1927 and December 1936 (see Table 6 , Appendix) did not distinguish between those who were wholly unemployed and those who were only unemployed for part of the week.
61. Canner, op.cit., p.138.

under 18, it would appear, was hit more severely than others by unemployment. This much is clear from statistical evidence cited in the annual reports of the local J.E.B.s. During one week in April 1919, for instance, 477 girls were in attendance at the local J.U.C.s and 396 boys. A more or less equal proportion of 15, 16 and 17 year old girls were in attendance; 128 15 year olds, 188 16 year olds and 161 17 year olds. A higher proportion of the boys who were in attendance were 16 and 17 year olds but there were still a significant number of 15 year old boys in attendance during the week in question; 90 in all.[62] The Superintendent of the Openshaw J.U.C. reported, in March 1924, that almost 200 14 and 15 year old boys and over 100 14 and 15 year old girls had attended his centre in the previous year.[63] These statistics clearly reveal, therefore, that 14 and 15 year olds definitely experienced bouts of unemployment, which was overlooked by academic commentators at the time. It was felt that the most crucial ages when the threat of unemployment was greatest for young workers were 16 and 18.[64] The above statistics show that, in Manchester at least, this was not the case; unemployment was a constant threat for all young workers under 18 in the city during periods of depression and not simply for 16 and 18 year olds.

62. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1918-19, pp.21-2 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.66.
63. id., pp.105-6.
64. See Note 15 of this chapter on this issue.

Before discussing the curriculum at the J.U.C.s and the overall purpose of the scheme, it should be pointed out that, except for a brief period between July 1919 and May 1921, day classes for 'unemployed' workers under 18 in the city were a permanent feature during this period and were not simply in operation during periods of severe economic depression. There were four J.U.C.s operating in the city in March 1923, for instance: a mixed centre in Ancoats; a girls' centre in Hulme; a boys' centre in Newton Heath and another mixed centre in Openshaw.[65] Three of these were still in existence a year later and a fourth centre, the Mill Street Institute for unemployed girls, had come into existence in November 1923.[66] Another day centre for unemployed boys was opened in July 1925. This was situated in the Y.M.C.A. buildings on Peter Street.[67] By the mid-1920s, then, there were five unemployment centres in the city catering specifically for young workers under 18.

The finance for these early centres was provided mainly by the Ministry of Labour, in the form of a grant, but the Ministry's contribution fluctuated from 75% of 'approved costs' to 50% of 'approved costs' and on occasions the Ministry

65. Canner, op.cit. p.104.
66. id., pp.104-5.
67. id., p.105.

withdrew its contribution towards the running costs of the centres altogether. On such occasions, M.E.C. was solely responsible for the continued existence of the centres and had to provide all the finance. But the centres were kept open during such periods. The Ministry of Labour's contribution was first withdrawn entirely in May 1923. The Ministry made no further contribution towards the running costs of the centres until September 1923,but the Manchester centres remained open throughout the interim period.[68] After September 1923, the Ministry would only guarantee to provide 75% of the finance if certain conditions obtained. One particularly stringent condition was that there had to be 50 boys in attendance at Newton Heath J.U.C. each week, otherwise the Ministry would cease to support the centre altogether.[69] The Ministry finally withdrew its support for the Manchester centres in April 1926 on the grounds that juvenile unemployment in the city was 'minimal' (ie. under 3%).[70] But the Manchester centres remained open throughout 1926 and by January of 1928 there were still four centres operating in the city.[71]

A new centre was opened in Byrom Street off Deansgate in June 1928.[72] The opening of the new centre had

68. id., pp.103-4; Bell, op.cit. p.2.
69. Canner, op.cit., p.104.
70. id., p.107.
71. id., pp.107, 109.
72. id., p.110.

resulted in the closure of the other four centres but three of these were re-opened again during 1931 when juvenile unemployment in the city was widespread.[73] There were still four unemployment centres for the under 18s locally in operation as late as 1935.[74] By this time, however, teenage workers were in heavy demand in most local trades and on the eve of the Second World War, in September 1939, only one day centre for 'unemployed' teenage workers remained open in the city; the Heyrod Street centre for unemployed boys, in Ancoats, which had opened in March 1935.[75]

What purpose or purposes did these day centres for 'unemployed' teenage workers serve ? Before answering this question, it is necessary to say what was not the J.U.C.s' function because some recent commentators have misunderstood the function of the centres whilst others have argued, unjustifiably, that the centres were a 'failure' without really explaining why. Gareth and Teresa Rees fall into the former category. They have argued that:

> there is certainly no evidence to suggest that they (the under 18s who attended the centres) found getting a job any easier, a factor which probably contributed to the centres' unpopularity.[76]

73. The three which re-opened in 1931 were: the Openshaw centre, the Newton Heath centre and the Hulme centre. See Canner, op.cit., pp.110-12.
74. id., p.173.
75. id., p.180.
76. See G.Rees and T.L.Rees, 'Juvenile Unemployment and the State between the Wars' in T.L.Rees and P.Atkinson (eds.), Youth Unemployment and State Intervention, London 1982, p.20.

This statement assumes that one of the J.U.C.'s functions was to retrain 'unemployed' young workers for specific jobs, but this was never one of the functions of the Manchester centres. According to the officials who organised the Manchester scheme, the purpose of the classes was 'to prevent demoralisation and degradation resulting from enforced prolonged idleness'.[77] It was not the J.U.C.'s function, therefore, to retrain teenage workers for specific jobs but, according to this statement, simply to keep their spirits up while they were 'unemployed'. Following on from this, it will be argued below, and it has been suggested already, that the centres were not intended as a cure for juvenile unemployment; they were merely an ad hoc response to the 'problem'.

It appears that the methods used in the local J.U.C.s to keep the young workers' spirits up during a period of 'unemployment' varied depending on the particular centre in question. Local centres quickly acquired a reputation for either being 'Scholastic centres' or 'Recreation centres' similar to Boys' and Girls' Clubs.[78] At one early post-war centre the emphasis was clearly on cultural rather than practical subjects: English and Welsh folk songs were sung and classical music by Rubenstein, Schumann, Handel, Schubert, Giordani and Glüch was played.[79] At all of the early post-war centres, however, the

77. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1918-19, p.16 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.65. The chief purpose of the centres that were set up in South Wales was also to buoy up the spirits of unemployed youngsters. See, for instance, Meara, op.cit., pp.87-8.
78. Canner, op.cit. p.65.
79. id., p.66.

curriculum was strictly non-vocational; boys and girls were taught Arithmetic, English Composition, Recreative Reading, Drawing, General Knowledge and Physical Training.[80] These were the core subjects but, as indicated above, other subjects were taught such as Music.

The girls who attended the local J.U.C.s were taught exactly the same subjects as the boys, the one exception being that girls were also taught Sewing.[81] But the two sexes attended the centres at different times; boys attended the centres in the mornings one week and girls would attend in the afternoons and this system would alternate each week.[82] The reasoning behind this system of half-daily instruction was that it allowed those who were attending a J.U.C. some time every day to look for work. This policy, it would appear, proved successful because, as we have shown, most of those who attended a local J.U.C. in the '20s and '30s were in attendance for less than a month and many for just a few days.[83]

80. ibid.
81. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1918-19, pp.18-20 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.66.
82. id., p.65. Boys and girls were obliged to attend a centre five half-days each week.
83. See above, pp.168-170.

The potentially demoralising effects of unemployment on the under 18s were thus largely mitigated, partly by the work of the local J.U.C.s and partly by the fact that most of those who experienced bouts of unemployment locally were only unemployed for extremely short intervals between leaving one job and starting the next. A number, as we have said, already had jobs and were working short-time for a limited period.

The staff at the local J.U.C.s went to great lengths, it seems, to vary the curriculum and to prevent youngsters from becoming bored and inactive. The boys who attended the J.U.C. in Ancoats in the early 1920s, for instance, built a wireless set and produced their own magazine, in addition to doing the core subjects of Arithmetic, English, General Knowledge, Drawing, Drill and Organised Games. They also paid a weekly visit to the local swimming baths for which there was no charge and they listened to Classical Music some afternoons.[84] One boy who attended the Deansgate J.U.C. in the late 1920s wrote down his impressions of the experience in an essay. He wrote:

> The J.U.C. is really a blessing in disguise for how many people know the truthfulness of the old proverbial saying 'Idleness Breeds Discontent'... the centres all over the country prevent the idleness breeding discontent, and harness the time that would otherwise be wasted, to some useful practical purpose. 85

84.Canner, op.cit., pp.102-4.
85.Quoted in id., p.110.

Girls who attended J.U.C.s in Manchester also appear to have derived at least some satisfaction from the experience. One girl who attended the Openshaw centre in the 1920s and then went to work in a factory wrote back to the Superintendent, saying how much she missed the centre. She wrote:

> I am getting along very nicely thank you but I don't like it. I would much rather be back at school... I will do all I can to live up to your ideas regarding my painting. I want you to be proud of me and I hope you will be some day. 86

Another girl who attended the above centre and then went to work in a shop asked the Superintendent if it would still be possible for her to attend the centre on Wednesday afternoons (her half-day holiday) to allow her to continue her education.[87]

It is not suggested, of course, that all those who attended a local J.U.C. derived as much satisfaction from the experience as the three quoted above. For some, the experience was mundane and tedious; one woman who attended a centre in the Staffordshire Potteries, for instance, commented:

86.Quoted in id., p.106.
87.ibid.

> The boys were all right, they got woodwork and what-have-you, but us women had either to do the laundry or cooking - there was nothing else for us to do. It was very boring, I thought. 88

Such evidence clearly indicates that young workers' responses to the centres were mixed. It cannot be argued, therefore, that the centres simply produced a feeling of 'alienation' in their young clientele, an argument put forward by Rex Pope in an article on the J.U.C.s.[89] The Superintendent of the Openshaw J.U.C. would certainly have disagreed with Pope's view. He believed that his centre provided the unemployed youngsters of his district with a worthwhile alternative to the streets and colourfully described his centre as 'an oasis in the desert of their drab life'.[90]

A number of the J.U.C.s locally were basically run as improving institutions. A Ministry of Labour report on the 'usefulness' of the J.U.C.s, written in 1928, pointed out that the chief value of the Manchester centres was:

88. Quoted in J.Horne, 'Continuity and Change in the State Regulation and Schooling of Unemployed Youth' in S.Walker and L.Barton (eds.), Youth, Unemployment and Schooling, Milton Keynes 1986, p.21
89. R.Pope, 'Education and the Young Unemployed: A Pre-War Experiment' J.F.H.E., Volume 2, No.2, Summer 1978, p.18.
90. Quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.106.

> the assistance they render in preventing unemployed juveniles from forming injurious personal attachments or taking casual and generally unpaid work, such as helping in garage work; and... affording a means of discovering latent talent... 91

Spurley Hey, Manchester's Director of Education who supplied this information, also felt that the J.U.C.s in Manchester promoted 'healthy competition' between 'juveniles' and that they also prevented girls and boys from mixing with 'undesirable acquaintances' on the street. Boys, especially, he felt, would be prevented from mixing with 'itinerant vendors of merchandise' and from becoming runners for street bookmakers.[92] According to Spurley Hey, then, the Manchester centres performed a number of functions: they kept unemployed youngsters out of trouble; the officials at the centres tried to discourage those who attended from entering so-called 'blind-alley' jobs (the local J.E.B.s, which co-operated with the J.U.C.s , also tried to do this of course) and they also encouraged indiviuals who were gifted at certain subjects to continue their education. This was the ideal, it seems, but the evidence available on the local centres suggests that only the Deansgate centre managed to combine all of these roles.

91. P.R.O., LAB 2/1311/EDJ 525/4/1928. National Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment - Inquiry into the Usefulness of Juvenile Unemployment Centres, 1928, (typescript).
92. ibid.

A Ministry of Labour official visited the Deansgate centre in October 1929 and again in March 1930 and wrote down her impressions after each visit. The 'majority' of the boys and girls who were in attendance on the first occasion, it appears, had either attended a Secondary School or a Central School and were hoping to obtain clerical jobs.[93] Commercial classes and typing and shorthand classes were in progress for these students but, in another room, basket weaving and woodwork classes were in progress which 'were composed of claimants of a much poorer and rougher type'.[94] It seems clear from this evidence, then, that the centres did not cater exclusively for boys and girls from the working-class as some academics have claimed. Indeed, a contemporary who visited a number of centres throughout Great Britain and then published a book on the work of the centres wrote:

> There are few educational institutions which attract so many different types of young folk as the Junior Instruction Centres... they may include boys and girls who have been educated at Secondary, Technical, Central, Elementary or Special Schools. Some may have passed a Matriculation Examination with honours and some may be mentally defective. They may include those from good homes and the slum-dwellers. They may vary from the regular church-goer and member of a voluntary organisation to the youth on probation. 95

93. P.R.O., LAB 2/1078, op.cit.
94. ibid.
95. Bell, op.cit., pp.21-2.

The evidence cited above on the curriculum and clientele at the Deansgate J.U.C. confirms Valentine Bell's impression: a wide range of subjects were taught to pupils of varying abilities and to pupils who were from different social backgrounds.

At the J.U.C. for unemployed boys in Ancoats, the curriculum was more uniform. Woodwork and indoor and outdoor games were the main subjects, which suggests that this centre catered exclusively for working-class boys.[96] Most of the boys who attended this centre were, apparently, physically and mentally normal though it was reported that a few were 'undersized' and some were excused from the physical training classes because of their poor health.[97] On Wednesdays and Thursdays, most of the boys in attendance at the centre played football on a recreation ground approximately one mile away from the club. Those who played had to play in their ordinary clothes because none of the boys could afford to buy the kit.[98] One third of the boys who were attending this centre in September 1936 had fathers who were out of work.[99]

96.Canner, op.cit., p.175.
97.ibid.
98.id., p.174.
99.ibid.

The Ancoats J.U.C. attracted the poorest unemployed boys in the city during this period but,despite this, few were in attendance for more than five weeks continuously.[100] Furthermore, the attendance rate fell dramatically in the late 1930s. 104 boys a week were attending the centre in 1935, but only around 35 boys were the following year.[101] The Deansgate centre closed in June 1937 because only around 20 pupils were attending the centre each day.[102] But the Ancoats centre remained open until September 1939 which suggests that, despite the low attendances, the centre was seen to be providing a worthwhile service.[103]

One service which none of the Manchester centres provided during this period, however, was a medical service. Although the poor physique of some young workers was commented upon by the officials who were involved with the service, nothing was done about this until a Ministry of Labour Memorandum on the subject, in September 1936, prompted a routine medical inspection of the boys who were attending the Ancoats centre.[104] The inquiry was conducted by a School Medical Services Sub-Committee in association with the School Medical Officer of the city. The inquiry was mainly undertaken to see

100. ibid.
101. id., p.174; M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1937, p.7 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.178.
102. ibid.
103. id., p.180.
104. id., p.177.

if there was a need for free meals, free milk and free biscuits. It was concluded that a mid-day meal was unnecessary because boys were only attending the centre for half a day. But the Committee recommended to the Ministry of Labour that free milk and biscuits should be provided. A regular medical inspection of the boys was not considered necessary because the Medical Officer had found 'no evidence of poor nutrition' and, in any case, it was felt that the boys who attended this centre were not there long enough for treatment to be carried out. The only provision which was made, regarding the health of the boys, was the introduction of free milk and biscuits in 1939.[105]

Despite the lack of progress in this area, however, it must be concluded that the centres which were set up locally for unemployed and underemployed young workers were a success. Rex Pope has reached a different conclusion. He argues that the centres which were set up in North-East Lancashire were an unmitigated failure, declaring:

> Their failure was... partly inevitable, partly the result of negative educational aims. It was influenced also by the transitory nature of attendance at the centres, by unsuitable accomodation (disused schools), inadequate facilities and staffing and by their method of recruiting (compulsion). Success, in these circumstances, was extremely unlikely. 106

105. id., pp.177-180.
106. R.Pope, '"Dole Schools": The North-East Lancashire Experience 1930-39', J.E.A.H., Volume IX, No.2, July 1977, p.32.

This seems unfair. The staff at the local centres managed to provide a service for unemployed young workers, despite the difficult conditions in which they operated. Far from pursuing 'negative educational aims', the teachers at the local centres were firmly committed to a policy of actively encouraging young workers to continue their education and this had positive results, as we saw earlier. They also sought to provide young workers from very different backgrounds with a cultural education which, owing to the limited amount of time they were n attendance at a centre, mainly took the form of visits to places of interest in the city such as Manchester Cathedral, the City Art Gallery and the Horsfall Museum. But, in addition, Folk songs were sung at one of the centres, lantern lectures were held at another and Classical Music was listened to at another.[107]

The staff at the centres obviously had no control over the high turnover, which was a product of the buoyant demand for juvenile labour. But what Pope overlooks is that the staff managed to provide an effective service in spite of fluctuations in the Ministry of Labour's financial support for the scheme. The Ministry withdrew its support for the Manchester scheme in April 1926 and provided no further financial assistance until Sept-

107.Canner, op.cit, pp.66, 110, 113.

ember 1926. But the Manchester centres continued to operate throughout 1926 and local schoolteachers volunteered to teach in the centres during the school holidays.[108]

The full-time staff at the Manchester centres, meanwhile, were not in a particularly enviable occupation. They enjoyed far less job security than schoolteachers and they were not entitled to certain pensions unlike schoolteachers. They also worked in extremely cramped and dingy rooms and there was a lack of basic facilities; at the Ancoats centre, for instance, there was a gymnasium but no wash basins and showers.[109] But the work of the local centres does not appear to have suffered much as a consequence of these problems.

The major problem encountered by the teachers was the problem of overcrowding. But this only ever reached a serious level in February 1930 when the Deansgate centre was the only one operating in the city for unemployed teenage workers. Serious overcrowding was quickly alleviated, however, by the re-opening of the Openshaw centre, which provided accommodation for 50 youngsters, and by the re-opening of the Newton Heath centre, which provided accommodation for 40-50 girls in 2 rooms.[110] Although the Deansgate centre continued

108. M.E.C., J.E.B., Annual Report 1926, p.4 quoted in Canner, op.cit., p.107.
109. id., pp.109,174.
110. P.R.O., LAB 2/1078, op.cit.

to cater for more young workers than there was room for after February 1930, the problem of overcrowding was never that serious. When, in March 1930, for instance, juvenile unemployment was at a high level in Manchester, 166 young workers were in attendance at the Deansgate centre and there was said to be only room for 100.[111]

Little information is available on individual teachers in the local centres, but the Superintendent at the Openshaw centre apparently tried desperately hard to channel the skills of boys who could 'calculate accurately a betting slip containing a dozen entries' into solving mathematical problems.[112] This man had no sympathy for unemployed boys who idled away their time standing on street corners. This led inevitably, he believed, to 'a serious deterioration in character 'and eventually to drunkenness or prison'.[113] Other prominent public persons in Manchester shared this view. An After-Care Officer in Salford wrote to the Manchester Guardian in January 1922, declaring that:

> The rot of unemployment is eating into the morale of the young people... there are unmistakeable signs that the enforced idleness is having a bad effect on these young people. A good proportion of their

111. ibid.
112. Canner, op.cit., p.106.
113. ibid.

> leisure is spent in the kinemas and other amusements. It has been found difficult to induce them to consider continued education and interest themselves in social activities when they are unemployed. 114

The argument of this section has been that the staff at the local centres achieved their limited aims under difficult circumstances. But is this to overlook that unemployment undermined the morals of young people, as the Salford After-Care Officer believed ? The final section of this chapter will now look in some detail at how, if at all, bouts of unemployment affected young workers.

William McG.Eagar and Herbert Secretan studied the effects of unemployment on boys in Bermondsey in 1925 and concluded that it had a profound effect on boys who held positions of responsibility in a Boys' Club:

> All of us who have direct practical experience in the management of Boys' Clubs are disappointed again and again by the inability of boy officers to stand the strain of unemployment.115

114.M.G., 21 January 1922.
115.McG.Eagar and Secretan, op.cit., pp.60-1.

They believed that boys who experienced unemployment were affected by it both in the short-term and in the long-term. Among the initial effects were that these boys tended to become 'slack, irregular, unthoughtful, self-centred and incapable either of initiative or sustained effort'.[116] If they were unemployed continuously for a few months, they were also likely to become bad citizens:

> If a boy is a good Club officer he is fairly certain to be a good employee, a good sportsman, and a good member of society in all its relations. A boy who goes to bits as a Club officer is gravely unlikely to fulfil the promise of good citizenship he showed before the process of disintegration began. 117

Finally, boys who experienced unemployment at regular intervals over a period of three to four years were likely to display clear signs of what the authors termed 'lasting deterioration'. This manifested itself in a number of ways:

> The outward signs are clear enough. The boys are no longer young hopefuls; they are premature cynics... The sense of humour persists, but it is coarsening. Their wit is getting bitter and self-destructive. Cleanliness, achieved earlier by a series of miracles in bathless homes, is neglected. Hero-worship of football professionals, is dead. Ambition is obviously absurd. Physique varies... 118

116. id., p.60
117. id., p.65.
118. id., p.67.

These were not the only symptoms of 'accumulated deterioration' which the authors cited; but the above list contains the major ones. How much truth is there in such colourful 'evidence' ?

McG.Eagar and Secretan produced, on their own admission, nothing more than a 'subjective' account of the adverse effects of unemployment on boys.[119] They eschewed scientific techniques for recording such matters as the deterioration in physique and instead simply recorded their impressions of the direct effects of unemployment on an undefined number of boys whom they knew.[120] This is not to suggest that their conclusions are invalid but since they conflate the two quite separate issues of unemployment and what they termed 'misemployment' (meaning employment in so-called 'blind-alley' jobs) it is difficult to say whether the adverse effects they attribute to unemployment are specific effects of unemployment or of certain types of employment. Certain types of factory employment were known to have a deleterious effect on physique, for example.[121]

It is far from clear whether the poor physique of some of the boys and girls who attended unemployment centres in Manchester was the direct result of unemployment. Since

119. id., pp.61-2. They acknowledged, for instance, that 'most evidence of the effects of unemployment must be generic and largely subjective'.
120. id., pp.57, 62, 64.
121. On this, see D.J.Collier's study, The Girl In Industry, London 1918, which examined the 'physiological effects of industrial work on growing girls'.

the statistical evidence available suggests that unemployment amongst the under 18s locally was short-term rather than long-term, it seems more likely that their health suffered because their families were experiencing poverty. Unemployment may still have been an influence on the level of poverty in certain families; it was pointed out earlier, for instance, that a number of the boys who attended the Ancoats centre in the mid-'30s had fathers who were out of work. But it is still far from clear whether teenage workers who experienced unemployment themselves suffered a deterioration in health directly as a result of their own unemployment.

To be fair, McG.Eagar and Secretan believed that boys who experienced unemployment suffered mentally, rather than physically, from their predicament. But, in suggesting that boys who became unemployed displayed certain negative characteristics, they came close to suggesting that there were employed and unemployed 'types' among the boys of Bermondsey. They specifically stated that there were sharp differences between the two which were clearly visible to the observer:

> A comparison of a group of boys who have for any length of time been unemployed with a group of boys from the same kind of homes in the same district who are in work, leaves no room for doubt that on the whole unemployment means slackness, softness, carelessness,

> roughness, diminished alertness and weakened self-respect,

they pointed out.[122] They also felt that boys who displayed these symptoms were extremely likely to commit criminal acts. To support this argument, they cited the case of 'H.J.' who at the age of 14 was described by his headmaster as 'an honest and industrious boy', but at the age of 16 years 10 months was sent to a Reformatory for breaking into a warehouse after being only intermittently employed for the interim two years:

> Possibly - even probably - H.J. would not now be detained in a Reformatory at the public expense if he had been able to obtain steady work,

they pointed out.[123] As with much of McG.Eagar and Secretan's evidence, however, it is unclear from the example of 'H.J.' whether he was driven to crime by his experience of unemployment or by his experience of 'dead-end' employment or because of other factors.

Was unemployment seen as a major cause of juvenile crime in Manchester in the '20s and '30s ? It is impossible

122.McG.Eagar and Secretan, op.cit., pp.62-3.
123.id., p.62.

to demonstrate one way or the other whether unemployed 'juveniles' (14 to 18 year olds) were more likely to commit criminal acts than those in employment because juvenile crime statistics do not supply information on the employment circumstances of individual juveniles. Furthermore, they only record the amount of crime which was detected; the proportion of undetected crime which was committed by unemployed juveniles is completely unknown. Nevertheless, despite the lack of solid statistical evidence on the relationship between unemployment and crime, a few tentative conclusions can be drawn from the comments made by the Chief Constable of Manchester in his annual reports. It appears, for instance, that while juvenile unemployment was undoubtedly a problem in the city during the 1920s, as has been shown, the level of juvenile crime in the city during the same period was not considered a problem at all. In his annual report for 1927 the Chief Constable of Manchester declared that:

> Juvenile crime is as low now as at any time for which records can be produced. 124

Furthermore, he placed the blame for much of the juvenile crime which was committed in the city on parents; unemployment

124. City of Manchester, Watch Committee, Chief Constable's Annual Report 1927, p.v.

was not seen as a cause of juvenile crime at all in 1927.[125] The Chief Constable once again drew attention to the low level of juvenile crime in the city in his report for 1929:

> It gives me great pleasure in calling attention to the fact that the number of juvenile offenders dealt with during the year is the lowest recorded,

he pointed out.[126]

It appears that the downward trend in juvenile crime in the city came to an end in 1929; in 1930, for instance, the Chief Constable reported that there had been a 37% increase in the number of children and young persons arrested for all offences and he described this as 'a serious increase'.[127] This was a slight exaggeration since the number of young persons arrested for all offences was only 458 throughout the entire year and most of the offences they were arrested for were petty offences such as shoplifting.[128] Interestingly, unemployment was not seen as an important factor in this increase despite the fact that juvenile unemployment in the city reached its highest inter-war level during 1931 and 1932. In his annual report for 1932, the Chief Constable pointed

125. The Chief Constable pointed out in the above report that 'parents are responsible to a great extent for the amount of juvenile crime' (ibid).
126. id., Annual Report 1929, p.iv.
127. id., Annual Report 1930, pp.ii, v.
128. ibid.

to a 'slight increase' in the level of juvenile crime in the city,but he did not attribute this to any single factor such as unemployment or defective parental supervision. In fact, he suggested that the increase 'may be regarded as an ordinary fluctuation' which implies that he had modified his earlier view about the seriousness of the juvenile crime problem in the city.[129]

The Chief Constable of Manchester reported a further increase in the number of juvenile shoplifters in his annual report for 1933:

> It is very regrettable that this increase is confined almost entirely to persons under 16 years of age,

he declared.[130] Nevertheless, an infinitesimal number of young offenders were prosecuted for committing this offence; only 59 boys and 24 girls and the previous year, only 17 boys and only 5 girls had been found guilty of this offence.[131] Defective 'parental control' was seen as the main reason for this increase; unemployment was not even cited as a cause, however.[132]

129. id., Annual Report 1932, p.ii.
130. id., Annual Report 1933, p.ii.
131. ibid.
132. ibid. The Chief Constable criticised parents for 'allowing children to visit the various large stores unattended'.

Besides a further increase in shoplifting offences committed by young offenders (no less than 118 of the 411 persons prosecuted for this offence were under 17), there was also a substantial increase in the number of bicycles stolen in the city during 1934 and the under 18s were thought to be largely responsible for this increase.

> The tendency towards criminality amongst children and young persons is causing me anxiety,

reported the Chief Constable and for the first time he cited unemployment as a major cause of the increase in the number of 'youthful offenders'. He stated, for instance, that:

> Employment - engendering as it does, discipline, mental occupation, and, to a great extent, contentment, must result generally in a decrease in the number of youthful offenders.133

Nevertheless, he still felt that parents were largely responsible for much of the increase in juvenile crime and stricter parental control, he believed, was the most effective remedy for combatting juvenile crime.[134]

133. id., Annual Report 1934, p.iii.
134. ibid.

By 1935, the Chief Constable had arrived at a completely new interpretation of why juveniles committed crimes. A study he conducted himself of all the cases which involved juveniles during 1935 suggested that very often juveniles committed crimes in groups or 'gangs' which usually consisted of three to six boys.[135] He did not, however, say whether the gangs in question were composed of unemployed boys or employed boys.

The Chief Constable stuck to his new thesis about the collectivist nature of much juvenile crime in the city in his annual report for 1936 but, by 1938, he had changed his mind again, declaring that:

> with all the information which has been collected it has not been possible to ascribe the increase in juvenile delinquency to any one cause. 136

By 1939, he was even suggesting that 'the juvenile figures had almost assumed normal' which implies that there was an acceptable level of juvenile crime, something he had been reluctant to admit in the past.[137]

135. id., Annual Report 1935, pp.viii, ix.
136. id., Annual Report 1938, p.8.
137. id., Annual Report 1939, p.8.

It seems clear, then, that youth unemployment was a recurring 'problem' in Manchester in the inter-war period but because most 14-18 year olds were only unemployed for short spells at a time (invariably no more than three to four weeks even during the worst years of the Depression) youth unemployment was not accompanied by an increase in juvenile crime. Throughout the 1920s, juvenile crime in the city was at its lowest level ever according to the Chief Constable of Manchester and although there was an increase in the number of petty offences committed by juveniles in the 1930s, this was associated more with defective parental control than with unemployment.

It is difficult to say whether unemployment had any other adverse effects on those 14-18 year olds who experienced it. There is some evidence that a period of unemployment could have a drastic effect on young people; two unemployed girls tried to commit suicide together by throwing themselves into the Rochdale Canal near Princess Street Bridge in May 1922. When the two girls appeared in court afterwards, they both said that they would attempt suicide again if they did not find work.[138] Unemployment had a far less drastic effect on most teenage workers, however. In Cardiff, where juvenile unemployment was more serious than in Manchester during the

138. M.G., 10 May 1922.

1930s, it was reported that girls who were experiencing periodic bouts of unemployment because they had been put onto short-time were reluctant to give up their jobs in shops, factories and workshops despite the fact that these employments were severely affected by short-time working. A report undertaken by the Save The Children Fund of Great Britain, into the effects of unemployment on children and young people, argued that girls in the above occupations were prepared to accept short spells of unemployment and showed no willingness to change jobs. The authors of this report commented:

> The money which they can earn when employed, together with the benefit they can draw when unemployed, appear to be sufficient to enable them to carry on. Consequently it is seldom that they can be induced to accept an alternative employment such as domestic service, in which they can be assured of constant work... 139

Another reason why young workers who had been put onto short-time work may have been reluctant to change jobs was that their employers were seen to be doing them a service in not putting them onto short-time work until they qualified for unemployment benefit. It was reported that the Cardiff

139. Save The Children Fund, Unemployment and the child: the report on an enquiry into the effects of unemployment on the children of the unemployed and on unemployed young workers in Great Britain, London 1933, p.73.

employer, for instance, was,

> a careful student of Unemployment Insurance regulations and divides up the work which he is able to give among as many juveniles as possible, standing his juvenile employees off in rotation when each has qualified for Unemployment Insurance. 140

Given the short-term nature of much juvenile unemployment around the country in this period, it seems that few 14-18 year olds actually suffered from it. The day centres that were set up in the areas where juvenile unemployment was regarded as a 'problem' (Manchester was one such area despite the lack of attention it has received from academic historians) specifically aimed at checking a deterioration in morale and they achieved this limited aim, not just in Manchester, but in areas where juveniles were continuously unemployed for longer such as in South Wales. Some historians of juvenile unemployment in this period have argued the opposite. Historians like Rex Pope and Gareth and Teresa Rees argue that the centres were an unmitigated failure. But the latter have misunderstood the actual purpose of the official centres whilst Pope adopts a peculiar logic in declaring that the centres were a failure, pointing, for instance, to the structural drawbacks of the buildings which is irrelevant unless it can

140. *id.*, pp.72-3.

demonstrated that such things prevented unemployed teenage workers from attending a centre.[141] The evidence available on the local scheme suggests that the makeshift nature of the accommodation in which the classes were held did not deter young people from attending the classes. A number, as we saw earlier, even attended the centres voluntarily. The remainder had to attend a centre in order to qualify for unemployment benefit. A few had to be coerced into attending a centre but absenteeism was not regarded as a serious problem locally.[142]

If the official centres for unemployed 14-18 year olds locally were a success, the same cannot be said of the centres which were run by voluntary societies. Manchester University Settlement opened a day centre for the unemployed boys of Ancoats in May 1931 but few boys attended the centre:

> The fruit of a hundred visits of boys on the lists of the Juvenile Employment Bureau might be an actual appearance of ten boys,

a Settlement officer wrote in 1932. 'Some of these', the official went on to point out,

141.See above,pp.174-175, 184-186.
142.See above,pp.165-166; Canner, op.cit., p.106.

> would fall off because the Club required effort, many were on odd jobs and newspaper rounds for two or three weeks at a time and came and went, some happily got jobs, some had already slipped into late hours in bed in the morning, and sloping about the streets in the day-time.143

Between September 1932 and May 1933 the average attendance at this centre was only 25 boys a day.[144] And the centre was finally forced to close in 1934, partly owing to a lack of money, but mainly because most of the boys who had attended the centre had found work.[145] From 1934 onwards, 14-17 year olds in the Ancoats district who found themselves unemployed were encouraged to attend the Settlement's Day Club for Unemployed Men. Few, if any, did because in the Settlement's annual report for 1936-7 it was stated that the membership of this club was 'sharply divided' between 'young men' of 18-25 and 'older men' in the 40-55 age-group.[146]

Before the mid-'30s, 14 and 15 year olds who were unemployed were not obliged to attend unemployment centres during the daytime and, as a consequence, a number of critics

143. Manchester University Settlement, Day Clubs for Men and Boys, An Experiment and an Appeal for Volunteers, Manchester 1932. None of the pages in this pamphlet are numbered.
144. Manchester University Settlement, Annual Report 1932-1933, pp.12-13.
145. id., Annual Report 1933-1934, p.16.
146. id., Annual Report 1936-1937, p.7.

did feel that this age-group were more likely to indulge in questionable pursuits than 16 and 17 year olds who were obliged to attend a day centre. Gwynne Meara was convinced that 14 and 15 year olds in South Wales did not attend unemployment centres during the day. He wrote that this age-group:

> drag out monotonous hours lounging on the streets, going to 'the pictures' and to 'the dogs', snatching a feverish enjoyment at 'twopenny hops', waking from their listless apathy only occasionally. 147

Meara was perhaps overcritical of the ways in which the young unemployed spent their free time. But his essential point, that unemployment did not affect the lifestyles of young workers who experienced it, is confirmed by Harley's study of girl wage-earners in Manchester. 56 of the girls Harley interviewed were unemployed, but the leisure habits of these girls did not differ at all from those of the girls who were in employment. The unemployed girls visited the cinema as often as the girls who were in employment, if not more often. Nearly half of the unemployed girls (25 out of the 56) visited the cinema twice a week. A further 11 unemployed girls went to the cinema between three and six times a week and 13 unemployed girls went dancing regularly.[148]

147. Meara, op.cit., p.106.
148. Harley, op.cit., pp.151-157.

Harley was clearly astounded by the above discovery. 'A question which comes to mind at once', she pointed out,

> is how they can afford to go to the pictures so often, since they are earning no wages and, in many cases, come from homes where the financial position is bad... Presumably they are given money for amusements by their parents. 149

It may be that unemployed girls had the same attitude about their unemployment benefit as other girls had about their wage packets; that is, they may simply have handed over a certain amount to their parents.[150] The point which needs to be stressed, however, is that the leisure habits of teenage girls locally did not change when they experienced bouts of unemployment, no doubt, as we have suggested, because bouts of unemployment tended to be short and were simply transitional phases between leaving one job and entering another.

It appears, therefore, that bouts of unemployment did not have a catastrophic effect on the under 18 age-group locally contrary to what Garside's pioneering article on the subject implies. This chapter has shown that the under 18 age-group locally were not afflicted by long-term unemployment, but

149. id., p.157.
150. On this, see below, pp.214-218.

tended to experience extremely short bouts of unemployment which probably explains why unemployment did not have any effect on the lifestyles of those who experienced it. Likewise, the short-term nature of youth unemployment locally probably explains why the juvenile crime rate did not increase markedly in the '20s and '30s. Although civic leaders like Spurley Hey, Manchester's Director of Education, feared that unemployed youngsters who roamed the streets would get into trouble, this was not borne out in the juvenile crime statistics produced annually by the Chief Constable of Manchester. Another reason why 14 and 15 year olds, who were not obliged to attend day centres before 1934, did not turn to crime is that a number attended centres voluntarily, as we saw earlier.

Having thus demonstrated in this chapter that unemployment amongst the under-18s of Manchester was not 'an economic and social problem of alarming proportions' and that it did not have any perceptible impact either on their behaviour or on their lifestyles generally, the remainder of this thesis will focus more directly on the lifestyles of teenage wage-earners outside work. The next chapter, Chapter 4, looks at the impact commercialised entertainment had upon the lifestyles of teenage wage-earners in the 1920s and 1930s.

CHAPTER 4: 'THE AGE OF LUXURY': YOUNG WAGE-EARNERS AND LEISURE.*

The teenager who had a significant amount of 'money to spend' on consumer products and on leisure generally - be it on cosmetics, magazines, motor cycles, cinemas or dance halls - is still thought to have suddenly appeared in Britain, along with the products that were allegedly aimed at the teenager, in the decade and a half after 1945. Both historians of 'youth' and sociologists of 'youth' seem to agree that the phenomenon Mark Abrams first identified and described in his pamphlet study The Teenage Consumer (published in 1959) was a by-product of the economic climate of post-war Britain.[1] It was only after the Second World War, Abrams argued, that working-class teenagers found themselves with a reasonable amount of disposable income, owing both to the improvement in their earnings and to the decline of youth unemployment. And, secondly, it was only in the 1950s that manufacturers first became interested in working-class teenagers as a viable market for particular leisure products and services.[2]

*This chapter is to be published in a forthcoming book, A.Davies and S.Fielding (eds.), Working-Class Culture in Manchester c1840-1940, Manchester University Press.

1. M.Abrams, The Teenage Consumer, London 1959; J.Springhall, Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960, Dublin 1986, Chapter 6; S.Hall and T.Jefferson (eds.), Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Sub-Cultures in Post-War Britain, London 1976. 'Our subject in this volume is Youth Cultures: our object, to explain them as a phenomenon, and their appearance in the post-war period' (id., p.9.); J. Davis, 'The Favourite Age': A Study of the Emergence and Rise to Prominence of the Concepts of Adolescence and Youth in Modern Society with special reference to the 'Cult of Youth' in Post-War Britain', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, 1983, Chapter 4.
2. Abrams, op.cit., pp.3, 5, 9, 10, 13.

This chapter will argue that Abrams exaggerated the differences between the lifestyles and spending patterns of pre-and post-war teenage wage-earners. Both of the developments which he described as 'post-war' developments - firstly, the working-class teenager who had money to spend on leisure and, secondly, the emergence of a youth market for particular leisure products and services - can be traced back to the inter-war period. The present chapter will demonstrate this, in the main,through a case study of the leisure behaviour and spending patterns of teenage wage-earners in inter-war Manchester. But, so as not to imply that the 'teenage consumer' was simply a regional phenomenon, evidence from other towns and cities will be used in addition to local evidence.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first will attempt to establish that young wage-earners of both sexes from working-class families did sometimes have significant amounts of disposable income. The second section will examine what they did with this disposable income. It will be argued that entrepreneurs and manufacturers were becoming interested in the teenage age-group as a viable market for their products and services in the '20s and '30s. In fact, local entrepreneurs, particularly dance hall managers and cinema managers, were beginning to pitch their entertainments specifically at the 'young, free and single' wage-earner . In

Manchester, at least, this appears to be a new phenomenon in the '20s and '30s.

After examining a wealth of contemporary evidence which points to the emergence of the teenage wage-earner as an important consumer of leisure products and services in the 1920s and the 1930s, Section Three will look briefly at how neighbourhood networks like street gangs and the 'monkey parade' were affected by the young wage-earner's increasing preoccupation with commercialised entertainment. It will be argued that, although these networks were by no means destroyed by commercialised leisure, the worlds of commercialised and non-commercialised leisure were becoming enmeshed, especially in an activity like 'parading' or 'promenading'. The 'monkey parade' was no longer simply a manifestation of a culture of poverty among working-class young people by the '30s, as Elizabeth Roberts has implied; but, increasingly, an activity which enabled young wage-earners to show off new outfits and new hairstyles.[3]

In the next chapter, Chapter 5, it will be demonstrated that authority figures' anxieties about well-paid working-class youths also surfaced in the '20s and '30s; that is, a generation before they were first widely publicised

3. Roberts, Woman's Place, op.cit., p.72. See below, pp.242-244 for a brief discussion of the 'monkey parades' in inter-war Manchester.

following the publication of an influential government report in 1960.[4] There was, for instance, a 'moral panic' of sorts in the 1930s following the suggestion by a number of Chief Constables around the country that the so-called juvenile 'crime-wave' in the '30s was the result of youths attending the cinemas and copying the crimes they saw in certain gangster films. This campaign will be discussed in some detail, not least because some of the most vociferous critics of the cinemas in this period were based in Manchester. The local youth leader Lilian Russell (wife of the deceased Charles Russell) is the obvious example. She wrote the standard book on Lads' Clubs in the '30s, Lads' Clubs: Their History, Organisation and Management (published in 1932), in which she singled out commercial cinemas as the most corrupting influence on youth.[5]

The first task, in this chapter, is to show that the 'teenage consumer' of the 1950s was not an entirely new phenomenon as both Abrams and the authors of the Albemarle Report thought.

4. Ministry of Education, The Youth Service in England and Wales, Report of the Committee Appointed by the Minister of Education in November 1958, Cmd. 929, London 1960. The above report became known as the Albemarle Report after its Chairman, The Countess of Albemarle. This is how it is referred to in the text.
5. C.E.B.Russell and L.M.Russell, Lads' Clubs: Their History, Organisation and Management, London 1932, p.215.

In their report on The Youth Service in England and Wales, published in 1960, the Albemarle Committee wrote:

> today's teenagers.... are living in a world more than usually different from that of their parents... These young people have tastes, in dress, in amusements and in many other things, widely different from and more costly than any their parents were able to entertain... A particularly strong imaginative effort is needed by anyone over 35 - by middle-class parents as much as by working-class parents - to understand the true quality of the lives of this generation.6.

Mark Abrams, a market researcher at the London Press Exchange, had reached a similar conclusion the previous year in his pamphlet study The Teenage Consumer. He had attempted to show how the spending patterns of teenagers in the 1950s were unique. Most of the 'average teenager's' pocket money in the late 1950s, he argued, was spent on new forms of leisure and new leisure products which had one thing in common: they were all aimed specifically at teenagers, whereas before the war working-class 'teenagers' had to spend what little pocket money they had on leisure services and consumer products that were aimed at adults.[7] The Albemarle Committee reiterated Abrams' main conclusion that teenage spending in the late '50s represented 'distinctive teenage spending for distinctive teenage ends

6. Ministry of Education, op.cit., p.31.
7. Abrams, op.cit., pp.9-10. See also J.Springhall, Coming, op.cit., p.222 for a reiteration of Abrams' findings. 'Before the arrival of the "Teddy boy" and the 'teenager' in British society, young people were often difficult to distinguish from their elders. They dressed much the same, they thought pretty much along the same lines and they even tried to behave the same...' (ibid.).

in a distinctive teenage world'. But it went further than Abrams in suggesting that the 'new' spending patterns of teenagers in the '50s were evidence of a growing generation gap between teenagers and adults.[8]

Abrams' pamphlet study and the Albemarle Report have between them given rise to a wealth of secondary literature on post-war youth all of which points to the uniqueness of the leisure world of post-war teenagers. One of the most recent accounts of the '50s teenager points to 'the liberating effects of the new consumer culture' of the 1950s; '50s teenagers, Simon Frith argues, were 'the first working-class generation to decide on their own status, their own sexuality, their own social codes'. Their freedom from previous restrictions, he later points out, made them 'vulnerable to new forms of corruption' such as the horror comic campaign which, according to him, was 'the first sign of the wave of anxiety that swept over parents and teachers about youth and the mass media'.[9]

Frith's account of working-class teenagers in the '50s and the earlier researches of Abrams and the Albemarle Committee exaggerate the differences between the lifestyle and spending patterns of young wage-earners before the war and those of young wage-earners after it. What seems equally striking

8. Ministry of Education, op.cit., pp.15-20, 24-25.
9. Simon Frith, 'Time To Grow Up', N.S., 4 April 1986, pp.12-14. See Chapter 5 of this thesis for an earlier 'moral panic' over 'youth and the mass media'.

are the basic similarities.

It is worth pointing out, at the outset, that Abrams' researches on the spending patterns of '50s teenagers did not in fact show what they purported to show; namely, that the '50s teenager, unlike his inter-war equivalent, spent his money on consumer products and leisure services that were aimed specifically at teenagers. The 'average teenager' in 1957, for instance, spent a measly 3% of his disposable income on quintessentially teenage products such as soft drinks and records. By contrast, he or she spent three times as much each week on cigarettes and tobacco; that is, on products that were aimed at adults. Other leisure goods and services that '50s teenagers spent significant amounts each week on were: the cinema and other entertainments(6% of the 'average teenager's' disposable income each week went on these in 1957); meals out (another 6% of weekly expenditure); saving for holidays (another 6%); clothing (13% of the teenage girl's weekly expenditure went on 'Women's Clothing' in 1957 and 5% of the teenage boy's went on 'Men's Clothing'); footwear (5% of weekly expenditure); chocolates and sweets (4% of weekly expenditure, that is, twice as much as weekly expenditure on records); books, papers and magazines (3% of the 'average teenager's' weekly expenditure went on these in 1957); bicycles and motor cycles (another 3%) and, finally, cosmetics (2% of the 'average teenager's' weekly expenditure in 1957).[10]

10.Abrams, op.cit., p.10.

Abrams was the first market researcher to analyse the spending patterns of British teenagers, but his studies throw no light, unfortunately, on the spending patterns of inter-war 'teenagers' so there is no way that the spending patterns of '50s teenagers can be compared with, say, the spending patterns of 'teenagers' in the 1930s; not in statistical terms at any rate. It is possible to show, though, that in qualitative terms the leisure habits and spending patterns of teenage wage-earners in the inter-war period were similar to those of post-war teenagers. This will now be demonstrated using the young wage-earners of inter-war Manchester as the main focus of the study.

Before pointing to some of the evidence which indicates that teenage wage-earners locally were important consumers of leisure and were beginning to be regarded as a worthwhile market to tap by manufacturers and local entrepreneurs, it needs to be shown that this age-group had the disposable income to spend significant amounts on leisure in the inter-war period. That this was the case, even in some extremely poor working-class families, was something which a number of social investigators noticed and commented upon. A study of the income and expenditure of 476 working-class families who inhabited slum properties in Ancoats, which was undertaken in 1937, revealed that the teenage wage-earners in these families only surrendered a portion of their earnings to the family

exchequer and kept the rest for personal expenditure. This produced a situation where the standard of living enjoyed by teenage wage-earners was far higher than that enjoyed by the rest of the family and particularly the mothers. Teenage wage-earners, the authors of this survey pointed out,

> would have holidays and outings and new clothes, while probably the parents, the mother certainly, stayed at home and wore old clothes.11.

The situation described in the survey quoted above was certainly not unique. Other middle-class investigators who studied the household budgets of working-class families in the inter-war period, found that teenage wage-earners, especially older ones, kept a significant portion of their earnings for personal expenditure and only handed over a certain amount to their parents for 'board and lodgings'. Bowley and Hogg, who studied the household budgets of working-class families in five towns (Reading, Northampton, Warrington, Bolton and Stanley) in the mid-1920s, wrote:

> [I]t is assumed that the incomes of all the members of the family are pooled. In fact, of course, grown children assert the right to their own money and only make a fixed payment to the household.12

11. Manchester University Settlement, Ancoats: A Study of a Clearance Area, Report of a Survey Made in 1937-38, Manchester 1945, p.21.
12. A.L.Bowley and M.H.Hogg, Has Poverty Diminished ?, London 1925, p.16.

The authors of the Merseyside Survey (published in 1934) examined the household budgets of a number of working-class families in Liverpool in the early 1930s and they too noted that:

> It is a matter of common experience that the husband and other earning members of the family usually hand over to the wife and mother only a part of their earnings for housekeeping: what they retain may be spent on 'necessaries' or on 'luxuries' according to their own choice. 13.

Percy Ford gathered data on the weekly income and expenditure of 559 working-class families in Southampton in 1931. He pointed out in his survey, which was also published in 1934:

> ...the amount and proportion [of his or her earnings] reserved by the child... tend to increase as he grows older, that there are 'good' children, and 'bad' children who refuse even to pay for any of their keep, are common knowledge. It is also true that some parents seem to be as ignorant of their children's earnings... as many wives are of their husband's. 14

The author of this study even implied that young wage-earners who kept a substantial portion of their wages for personal expenditure were partly responsible for the degree of poverty in certain families.[15]

13. D.Caradog Jones (ed.), The Social Survey of Merseyside, Volume I, London 1934, p.148.
14. P.Ford, Work and Wealth In A Modern Port: An Economic Survey of Southampton, London 1934, p.136.
15. id., p.137.

Seebohm Rowntree, who obtained data on the household budgets of 16,362 working-class families in York in the mid-'30s, also pointed out that young wage-earners in these families did not automatically hand over their unopened wage-packets to their mothers. He perceptively argued that a distinction had to be made between a family's total weekly income and its available weekly income and made the point that social investigators before him had made about the young wage-earner's reluctance to surrender his or her entire earnings to the household exchequer.

> It is the general custom [among young wage-earners]... to pay ... their parents such portion of their wages as they would have to pay for board and lodgings if not living at home,

Rowntree pointed out.[16] And, as a number of the case studies he cites show, young wage-earners in working-class families often retained a substantial amount of their weekly earnings for their own expenditure. One boy of 19 whose father was unemployed and whose family, according to Rowntree, was only marginally above the poverty line, earned 30s a week. He only handed over 18s of this for his 'keep' and kept the remaining 12s for himself.[17] Another boy of 17,

16. B.S.Rowntree, Poverty and Progress: A Second Social Survey of York, London 1941, pp.125,27. The only town in which a different system appears to have prevailed was Lancaster where, according to Elizabeth Roberts, all the wage-earners in a family handed over their unopened wage packets to the mother 'who then decided how the income should be spent'. See E.Roberts, 'The Family' in J.Benson (ed.), The Working Class In England 1875-1914, Kent 1985, p.26.
17. Rowntree, op.cit., p.130.

whose family were only marginally above the Rowntree poverty line, earned 27s a week as a machinist in a factory. He handed over only 14s a week for his 'keep' and kept 13s for himself.[18] A boy apprentice in another family on the verge of poverty earned 35s a week, gave his mother only 18s and kept 17s. His 18 year old sister who earned 29s working in a factory only gave her mother 15s and kept 14s for herself and so on.[19]

All the social investigators who studied the income and expenditure of working-class families were agreed, then, that the young wage-earners in these families invariably kept a significant portion of their weekly earnings for spending money. But what determined how much of their earnings they kept ? The degree of poverty in a particular family does not appear to have been an important influence, certainly on the evidence presented above. Neither does the sex of a young wage-earner. Many girls, as we shall see, had as much disposable income for conspicuous consumption as boys. The age of a young wage-earner, however, was important and did influence the amount of spending money young wage-earners felt it acceptable to retain for personal expenditure. Thus, whilst girls of 14 or 15 might hand over their wage packets to their mothers and only receive a few coppers back, girls of 16 and

18. id., p.137.
19. id., p.134.

17 insisted on keeping more. Joan Harley was startled at the amount of money girl wage-earners in Manchester spent on themselves and on leisure each week. Most of the girls she spoke to:

> seem to spend their money on amusements, cosmetics and hairdressing. The majority go to the cinema and buy magazines. One or two may occasionally buy themselves a pair of stockings, a scarf or a handbag, but as a general rule... their parents pay their travelling expenses to work and provide their clothes. 20

Few of the girls Harley spoke to about their leisure stayed in during the evenings, even on weekdays. The vast majority (90%, or 149 girls out of 169 she interviewed), visited the cinema at least once a week, apparently regardless of the film that was being shown. Some girls went to the cinema as often as six times a week and a number also found time to visit dance halls.[21] Harley was extremely concerned about such undiscriminating and, as she saw it, such unbeneficial use of leisure time, declaring:

20. Harley, op.cit., p.101.
21. id., pp.96-7, 100-01, 107, 111, 157.

> The big field of leisure for... girls is out of doors in... the adjuncts of the cinema and the dance hall. While it would be idle to criticise these ways of spending leisure... it is clear that in so far as young girl wage-earners cannot discriminate between excess and moderation, these activities are to say the least of it not beneficial to them.22

Harley was concerned about the growing influence of cinemas and dance halls in the lives of teenage girls growing up in the 1930s,for two reasons. Firstly, she felt that cinemas and dance halls were drawing young wage-earning girls away from their homes and therefore away from their families because cinemagoing and dancing, at least for teenage wage-earners, were peer-group activities.[23] It is difficult to argue with this, given that a number of the girls she spoke to visited a cinema or a dance hall on most nights of the week.

She also felt that many of the films girl wage-earners saw at the cinema glorified materialism and wealth. She was convinced that the Hollywood musicals, for instance, were having an effect on the girls and she produced evidence in support of this. A few of the girls she spoke to, she claimed, had adopted a 'Hollywood accent' and a number of others copied the dress styles, hairstyles and mannerisms of their favourite

22.id., p.101.
23.id., pp.107,112.

film actresses to a ludicrous degree. '[T]he influence of a popular star', Harley wrote,

> is easily traceable in quite a number of girls in the angle of a hat, the way a scarf is worn, the style of hairdressing and even the way of entering a room, shaking hands and sitting in a chair.24

Two other pieces of evidence from different parts of the country confirm Harley's impression that girl wage-earners were becoming obsessed with the film world by the 1930s. The authors of The New Survey of London Life and Labour (published in 1934) wrote of the impact the cinema was having on girl wage-earners in London. They commented:

> The influence of films can be traced in the clothes and appearance of the women... girls copy the fashions of their favourite film star. At the time of writing, girls in all classes of society wear 'Garbo' coats and wave their hair à la Norma Shearer or Lilian Harvey.25

A shop girl from Leeds confirmed the impression Harley and the authors of the London Survey had about the cinema's influence on girls, in a letter to a weekly film magazine which was published in November 1933. She wrote:

24. id., p.109.
25. H.Llewellyn Smith et.al. (eds.), New Survey of London Life and Labour, Vol.9, London 1934, p.47.

> I wonder whether people realise how very strong is... [the] effect [of the cinema] on the lives of hundreds of girls in similar positions to myself. Here is my weekly budget: Wages 32s - Board and lodging 25s - Saturday visit to cinema 1d - Monday visit 7d - Thursday visit 7d - That makes 27s 2d. Then there is threepence for Film Weekly and three shillings for dress allowance... People consider me smartly dressed, but this is undoubtedly because I copy the clothes I have seen in films. Powders, soap and odds and ends are those used by my favourite film stars. When I get a rise in salary, I shall be able to afford another night at the pictures.26

When girls in Manchester were not 'at the pictures', it seems they were invariably either talking about pictures or reading about them. The following account of a typical Monday evening was written by a 12 year old schoolgirl from Hulme, Manchester, in the summer of 1939:

Monday

4pm.	Left school with girl friend, talked about school and film stars...
6.10pm.	Girl friend called for me. Walked to pictures.
6.30pm.	Saw 'It's in the Air'.
9pm.	Left pictures, talked about picture, met two girl friends on the way home.
9.15pm.	Stood talking at corner with two girls about clothes, holidays and boys...
10pm.	Arrived home, had supper, listened to dance music, talked to family about pictures.... 27

26. Film Weekly, 3 November 1933, cited in S.C.Schafer, 'Enter the Dream House': The British Film Industry And The Working Classes In Depression England, 1929-1939', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1982, p.54.
27. Cited in H.E.O.James and F.T.Moore, 'Adolescent Leisure in a Working-Class District', Occupational Psychology, Vol.XIV, No.3, July 1940, p.135.

This girl was not exceptional. Girls in Hulme spent between a third and a half of their free time each week (excluding weekends) inside a cinema, from the age of 12 right up to the age of 21, according to the authors of a survey on 'adolescent leisure' in Hulme undertaken in 1939.[28] 'Adolescent boys' in Hulme spent approximately one-third of their free time between Monday evening and Friday evening inside a cinema.[29]

The 'working boys' and 'working girls' of Hulme visited cinemas as frequently as other 'adolescents', but they also found time to visit dance halls on weekday evenings. For both sexes, weekday visits to dance halls began at the relatively young age of 15. Young wage-earners of both sexes continued to go dancing on weekday evenings right up to at least the age of 21.[30] None of the boys who were attending central schools and none of the girls who were attending secondary schools visited dance halls during the week; presumably because they could not afford to go on a disposable income which must have been extremely limited.[31] Schoolboys

28. id., pp.140, 138-9. The Hulme Survey was based on information provided by 535 'working-class adolescents' from the district between the ages of 12 and 21. The sample comprised 165 'adolescents' who were attending elementary schools; 210 who were attending central and secondary schools and 160 who were working. Each individual was asked to keep a diary for a week in which he or she would record, among other things, all the leisure activities pursued during that week and the time spent pursuing them. The data for this survey was collected during June and July of 1939. See id., pp.134-6.
29. id., p.139.
30. id., pp.139-40.
31. ibid.

and schoolgirls of all ages could still afford to visit a cinema regularly, however, because admission prices at local cinemas could be as low as 1d in the 1930s and the average price of a ticket locally in 1937 was only 6d.[32] Thus, although teenage wage-earners alone had access to dance halls, schoolboys and schoolgirls did spend some money on cheaper forms of commercialised entertainment, notably on visits to cinemas. Having said this, the young wage-earner was potentially a more lucrative market to manufacturers and to entertainment entrepreneurs than schoolboys and schoolgirls and, as this chapter will now attempt to show, such people were beginning to aim their products and services at the young wage-earner in the 1920s and 1930s.

A plethora of magazines aimed at young wage-earners first appeared in the inter-war period. One of the first cinema weeklies for girls, Girls' Cinema, was launched in 1920 and survived until 1932 when it was merged with the Film Star Weekly.[33] From the very beginning, Girls' Cinema, which sold for 2d a copy, ran articles that glorified the film world and particularly the lives of American film stars. The very first issue, in October 1920, included an article by Wallace Reid (who was described as 'the ideal screen lover') on 'The Girls he loves to woo'.[34] By 1929, the magazine also included

32. See Les Sutton's autobiography, Mainly About Ardwick, Volume I, Manchester 1975, pp.2-3. See also Harley, op.cit., p.111. Cinema tickets locally invariably cost less than tickets for dance halls in 1937. A dance hall ticket could cost as much as 2s, but a cinema ticket rarely exceeded 1s [ibid].
33. See the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London, periodicals index.
34. Girls' Cinema, 16 October 1920. Copies of this magazine were consulted in the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

'Dorothy Deane's Weekly Letter from Hollywood' and Clive Brooks 'on Hollywood': 'Hollywood, as everybody knows, is the emotional centre of the world', he wrote,

> Love dramas are manufactured with almost the same rapidity that cars are manufactured in Detroit.35

Clive Brooks's life on the screen, readers were told:

> largely consists of making ardent love to such beautiful women as Pola Negri Billie Dove, Florence Vidor and Evelyn Brent;

but it was stressed that, off the screen, he enjoyed 'a happy family life'.[36]

Magazines like Girls' Cinema were not just vehicles for fantasies and escapism. Readers were also given practical advice; Priscilla Dean, for instance, ran a regular feature on 'Beauty Hints'. And, such magazines were also potent vehicles for advertisers. A single issueof Girls' Cinema in July 1929 contained advertisements promoting skin cream, hair remover and aspros.[37]

35.Girls' Cinema, 6 July 1929.
36.ibid.
37.ibid.

Magazines like Girls' Cinema - and a crop of others that appeared in the '20s and '30s such as Red Star Weekly (1929), Secrets (1932), Oracle (1933), Lucky Star (1935), Miracle (1935) and Glamour (1938) - were read by, and indeed were aimed at, girl wage-earners from the working-class. The editor of Peg's Paper, which appeared in 1919 and ran continuously right up to the Second World War, was quite explicit about who this weekly paper was aimed at. It was stated in the very first issue,in a somewhat patronising editorial, that the magazine was aimed at 'mill-girls'. The editor, a beneficent presence called 'Peg', wrote:

> It is going to be your weekly pal, girls. My name is Peg, and my one aim in life is to give you a really cheery paper like nothing you've ever read before. Not so very long ago, I was a mill-girl too. Because I've been a worker like you, I know what girls like... Look on me as a real friend and helper: I will try to advise you on any problems. 38

Whilst a number of the magazines mentioned above devoted space to some of the adolescent girls' 'problems', their editors and publishers were interested in more earthly matters such as creating a stable readership. At least one girls' magazine asked its readers to write in indicating

38.Cited in C.L.White, Women's Magazines 1693-1968, London 1970, pp.97-8.

which features they liked best and which they did not like.[39] Such market research was an ingenious means of guaranteeing a stable readership. Another technique used to persuade girls to buy a particular magazine was to include free gifts with the magazine such as dress patterns. Once a magazine had acquired a stable readership, manufacturers were granted advertising space in the magazine to promote their products and the readers were encouraged to part with yet more of their disposable income on various brands of cosmetics.[40]

A number of the girl wage-earners Joan Harley interviewed in 1935 read the 'twopenny weeklies' referred to above. In fact, according to Harley, they read little else. The only books they read were books about film stars or abridged 'film versions' of the classics and most of them

39. In 1931, The Schoolgirl sought such information from its readers and after the replies were received a 'Schoolgirl Census' was printed in the magazine which showed that cinema stories were the most popular features. Consequently, most of the girls' weeklies that were printed by the Amalgamated Press in the early '30s (The Schoolgirl was one of these; Girls' Cinema was another; Screen Stories another and Girls' Crystal another) began to shift the focus away from light fiction stories towards providing their readers with useful practical information on their favourite film stars, such as whether or not Lila Lee's eyelashes were genuine and whether or not popular actresses like Helen Bow or Joan Crawford had any marriage plans. For an interesting essay on magazine reading among girls in the inter-war period, see K.Drotner, 'Schoolgirls, Madcaps and Air Aces: English Girls and their magazine reading between the Wars', Feminist Studies, Volume 9, No.1, Spring 1983, pp.33-52(42-3).
40. See especially Girls' Cinema, 6 July 1929.

bought the magazines mainly for their film content.[41] Harley was understandably concerned, therefore, both about the narrow reading tastes of the typical wage-earning girl and about her narrow outlook generally. She probably overstated her case, though, in declaring:

> The combined effect of magazines and films cannot fail to encourage a craving for excitement and must eventually drug their mentality and have a detrimental effect on their outlook.42

Harley did not consult the local press to see if this source too was urging wage-earning girls to spend their disposable income on commercialised leisure and on consumer products, as the magazines they invariably read were. But, had she done so, she would have found much evidence to support her argument that girls were being encouraged to 'crave for excitement'in their free time.

Leisure which offered the young wage-earner of both sexes excitement was leisure which had to be paid for, according to the journalists who wrote columns in the local press in the '20s and '30s. An article by a 'Miss Pat Sykes', which appeared in the Manchester Evening News in January 1929 and which was presumably aimed at young, unmarried, wage-earning

41.Harley, op.cit., pp.138,130.
42.id., pp.139-40.

girls, drew attention to a 'Modern Craze For Leisure' which its author then proceeded to define as a craze for dancing at commercial dance halls. She argued that old adult dances like the lancers and the foxtrot were 'doomed' and she implied that dancing at dance halls was becoming an activity which only the young generation indulged in.[43]

An anonymous article which appeared in the Manchester Guardian three years earlier, in October 1926, also implied that young wage-earners were the chief beneficiaries of the post-war explosion in commercialised entertainment:

> Grandmothers and bishops, preaching from their armchairs and pulpits, insist that this is the Age of Luxury... short skirts, lipsticks, vulgar films... sex novels, jazz, the Eton crop... There is almost no end to the list of abominations... Before the war and in the uneasy years which immediately followed it, luxury was mainly a matter of means. Now any young typist from Manchester or Kensington can keep her hair trimmed and waved and her busy feet in fine silk stockings and pale kid shoes.44

Another article which appeared in the Manchester Evening News in January 1929 urged the fathers of wage-earning

43. M.E.N., 1 January 1929.
44. M.G., 2 October 1926.

boys to take more interest in their son's leisure behaviour. 'How many fathers', it was asked, 'know what kind of cinemas their sons attend, or where they spend their hours of recreation?' The author of this article was someone who described himself as 'an Ordinary Man'. Having reminded fathers of their duties towards their sons, he then urged them to:

> Tell your boy what a wonderful age this is for the youth. Never was there an age when youth had such advantages and opportunities.45

His words were echoed in other articles on leisure which appeared in the local press. Robert Blatchford, who wrote a regular column for the Manchester Evening News in the '20s and '30s, noted that wage-earning boys were the main beneficiaries of recent developments in commercialised leisure and certainly the main beneficiaries of 'the talkies' and motor cycles. He had no objections to the advent of motor cycles. But he violently objected to the influence the American films were having on the language spoken by youths. English youths, he argued in 1937, were resorting to 'a sorry mess of lubberly slang' frequently using terms like 'Sez yous' and 'O.K.' as a result of seeing far too many American films.[46] Another journalist on the M.E.N., Sir Alfred Yarrow, was less dismissive about the leisure habits of male youths than Blatchford. He

45. M.E.N., 7 January 1929.
46. M.E.N., 5 January 1929; M.E.N., 10 September 1937. The same criticism was made in a later generation. See R.Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments, Middlesex 1957, Chapter 8(A).

pointed to the greater opportunities young wage-earning boys and their girlfriends had to escape the claustrophobic world of the city and to venture into the countryside on bicycles, in an article which appeared in the paper on 14 January 1929.

How accurate were the impressions of middle-class journalists and academics in the '20s and '30s in suggesting that commercialised leisure was increasingly being aimed at the younger generation and was no longer aimed simply at adults or families, as was certainly the case, at least in Manchester, before the First World War?[47]

It seems quite clear that the main providers of commercial entertainment in Manchester, cinema and dance hall managers, were definitely beginning to appeal directly to

47. See, for instance, two recent articles on Manchester Music Halls before 1914 which confirm this impression: D.Höher, 'The Composition of Music Hall Audiences, 1850-1900' in P. Bailey (ed.), Music Hall: The business of pleasure, Milton Keynes 1986, Chapter 4 and C.Waters, 'Manchester Morality and London Capital: The Battle over the Palace of Varieties' also in Bailey, op.cit., Chapter 7. See, also, J.H.Hobbins, 'From the Threepenny Gallery: Some Impressions of the Cheap Theatre', Odds and Ends, Volume 49, 1903, pp.365-382. Hobbins visited four 'cheap theatres' in Manchester, the Edwardian equivalent of 'the penny gaffs', and concluded that the audiences at these theatres were mainly adults - men and women - with a few children. Finally, see E.A.Hadden, 'Women's Recreations in Ancoats', Odds and Ends, Volume 50, 1904, pp.305-322. She argued that the wives and daughters of artisans were 'entirely dependent' on Sunday schools for their recreation and she spoke as a member of 'the artisan class'. Both single working girls and married women participated in the same activities: tea-parties, singing classes, amateur theatricals, etc.

'youth' by the 1920s. A number of films shown locally during the 1920s were firmly pitched at youth judging by the titles. In January 1920, for instance, the 'Tower Picturedrome' in Broughton screened The Echo of Youth and Blindness of Youth in the same week.[48] And, during the same month, the 'Temple Pictorium' on Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, screened a film called Jazz Mania.[49] In November 1929, 'Manchester Hippodrome' screened Movietone Follies of 1929, a song and dance talking film about a 'jazz-mad flapper' (played by Sue Carroll), the theme of which was 'Youth with a capital Y'.[50]

The first talking picture to be screened at 'Manchester Hippodrome' was The Perfect Alibi, a Hollywood gangster film starring Roland West, which 65,000 people saw during a two-week period in August 1929.[51] Gangster films like The Perfect Alibi were extremely popular with teenage boys and, consequently, were seen by some authority figures in the '30s as the most plausible explanation of the so-called juvenile 'crime-wave' in these years. Juvenile boys, it was argued, imitated the crimes they saw in such films. This 'moral panic' over the kinds of films young wage-earners habitually went to

48. See the weekly film programme, The Manchester Programme: Entertainments and Pleasures (T.M.P.E.P.), 26 January 1920, M.C.R.L., Arts Library Collection.
49. id., 5 January 1920.
50. id., 11 November 1929.
51. id., 19 August 1929; id., 26 August 1929. 'Manchester Hippodrome' was still, primarily, a music hall in August 1929. But, because The Perfect Alibi attracted audiences of 'astonishing dimensions' during the first week it was shown, 'the talkies' took pride of place at 'the finest music hall in the provinces' for four weeks in all. See id., 19 August 1929; id., 2 September 1929; id., 9 September 1929.

see in the 1930s will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5. But it is worth pointing out here that potential delinquents, so it was believed, attended the cinema and saw such films in groups consisting of boys of a similar age. They did not go to see gangster films with their parents and there was never any mention during the debate over the effects of such films that adults actually went to see these films. It can be tentatively suggested, therefore, that gangster films, too, were pitched at youth.

The dance halls which began to open in working-class districts of Manchester in the 1920s catered exclusively for young wage-earners between the ages of 16 and 25, according to Robert Roberts. He records in The Classic Slum, for instance, how:

> In the explosive dancing boom after the war, the young from sixteen to twenty-five flocked into the dance halls by the hundred thousand: some went 'jigging' as often as six times a week. The great 'barn' we patronised as apprentices held at least a thousand... at 6d per head (1s on Saturdays) youth at every level of the manual working-class, from the bound apprentice to the 'scum of the slum', fox-trotted through the new bliss in each other's arms. 52

Roberts's impression of the clientele of the dance halls of post-war Salford are reaffirmed in recorded interviews with

52. R.Roberts, Classic Slum, op.cit., p.188. Young wage-earners between 16 and 25 also monopolised the dance halls of Bolton in this period. See, for instance, Tom Harrisson's report on his visits to the Palais of Bolton in 1938; T .Harrisson, 'Whistle While You Work', in J.Lehmann (ed.), New Writing, 1, Autumn 1938, pp.47-67. 'They are all young folks from fifteen and sixteen to twenty-five...' (p.54).

old people who refer to dance halls in Manchester during the same period. The following account is by a former Trafford Park apprentice. He is speaking of the period immediately after the First World War, in about 1919:

> the 16 years of ages was going then oh and they were going there in clean collars... every Saturday night and... when you went to work on a Monday morning you was thinking about it, next Saturday night the dance will be on... and that was your thoughts all the way through the week, waiting for Saturday night for the dance to be on.53

According to this gentleman, the dances in Trafford Park began to attract young people from outside the district when a local band formed and began playing regularly at the dances:

> that was when it developed when the band was there, and then it turned into a real Saturday night, all the people used to come along - the teenagers - from Salford and Gorse Hill and Stretford.54.

The local dance halls which teenage wage-earners frequented were invariably supervised by an 'M.C.'. But this did not prevent the clientele from using the dance halls for their own purposes. 'Most of us', Roberts wrote,

53.M.S.O.H.A., Tape 780.
54.ibid.

> went to the 'Crown' to dance and to find a girl to dally with on Sunday evening - sex night Number One - down some local lovers' lane.[55]

Local Jewish youths, apparently, went to certain dance halls specifically to meet English girls.[56] And all of the local dance halls which the teenage age-group attended, it seems, served as meeting places for gangs of male youths who were just as obsessed with fashion and the film world as teenage girls. The Napoo gang, for instance, which regularly met at a dance hall in Belle Vue immediately after the First World War, wore a highly distinctive uniform which was borrowed from American gangster films. Each gang member wore a navy blue suit, a trilby and a pink neckerchief. The fear this gang aroused among the population of Ancoats, where its members lived and worked, suggests that it should be viewed essentially as a pre-Teddy boy youth cult. There is evidence, for instance, that this gang even pulled up cinema seats in the 'Cosy Corner' picture house in Ancoats shortly after the First World War.[57]

The evidence presented above on dance halls ought to indicate that in discussing the impact commercialised leisure had on the teenage age-group during the 1920s and the 1930s, which quite clearly was significant, we are not simply arguing

55.Roberts, Classic Slum, op.cit., p.190.
56.M.S.O.H.A., Tape J43 and Tape 189.
57.M.S.O.H.A., Tape J124, Tape J214 and Tape 486.

that teenage girls and teenage boys were passive recipients in this process. In fact, the evidence cited above suggests that teenage wage-earners used the ephemera which was sold to them for their own purposes and the Napoo gang,mentioned above,illustrate this well.

Certain types of consumerism required considerable effort from those who were consuming. Boys who bought the 2d weekly Hobbies in the early 1930s, for instance, were encouraged to build models and toys 'for little brothers or young friends'; to make beads and necklaces 'for your lady friends' and cigarette boxes, pipe racks and match holders for 'fathers and uncles'. In July 1931, this magazine encouraged its readers to enter a competition to make the best model of M.V.Brittanic out of cardboard (the first prize was a 2 horse power motor cycle) and the same issue included detailed features on how to make gramophone records, how to make a bathing buoy and air cushion for non-swimmers, how to make a useful cabinet for the coin collector and how to keep fish in a marine aquarium.[58]

Though magazines like Hobbies encouraged boys to use their spare time constructively, many of the activities which were recommended in these magazines still required boys to spend money on leisure. Readers of Hobbies magazine, for instance, were encouraged to purchase fretsaws and other tools

58. Hobbies, 4 July 1931; id., 11 July 1931; id., 28 November 1931. This magazine was consulted at the British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

and raw materials like wood at regular intervals.

> Arrange... to put away a certain sum... each week for the purchase of more materials, or extra tools,

readers were told in November 1931.[59]

By the early 1930s, there was a plethora of specialist hobbies magazines for teenage boys and teenage girls in Britain which suggests that much teenage consumerism may have taken place in and around the home and not necessarily in the public sphere. Among the magazines that were in circulation in 1930 were the following: Home Topics, a weekly for boys and girls which was published in Manchester; The Motor Cycle Book for Boys, published fortnightly; Model Railway News, published once a month; Model Yachtsman, also published once a month; Motor Cycle, a 3d weekly which sold more copies per week than any other specialised journal 'in the world' in 1930 with 160,000 certified Net Sales per week; Stamp Collecting, another weekly; Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly and, finally, The Stamp Lover, a monthly.[60] Among the magazines specifically for teenage girls and young women were: Fashions For All, a monthly; Home Fashions, another monthly; Leach's Home Dressmaker, another monthly; Leach's Sixpenny Knitting and Handcraft Series,

59. ibid.
60. See The Advertiser's Annual and Convention Year Book 1930, for a full list of all the weekly, fortnightly and monthly magazines which were aimed at teenage boys and teenage girls. Copies of this periodical, which was published for the benefit of 'All [those] engaged in Advertising and Selling', are kept in M.C.R.L., Social Sciences Library.

another monthly, and Welldon's Home Dressmaker, another monthly.[61]

The fact that there was an enormous amount of hobbies literature by the '30s, then, much of it aimed at the young, implies that alongside the teenage consumer who spent his or her disposable income at the cinema or at a dance hall was another who spent his or hers on a hobby; in other words, teenage spending was both a public and also a private affair. It is still difficult to say much about the latter, however, because contemporaries wrote mainly about the activities which teenage wage-earners as a group indulged in.

Two surveys which were undertaken in the 1930s into the leisure habits of teenage wage-earners in Manchester indicated that hobbies were not anathema to this group. Little mention was made, however, of the types of hobbies that were pursued. Only Joan Harley mentioned specific hobbies that were pursued by teenage girls. These included doing jigsaw puzzles, knitting, sewing, swimming and watching dirt track racing.[62] These were all, of course, activities which would have required girls to spend money on leisure.

One of Harley's most interesting findings, as we noted in Chapter 3, was that girls who were unemployed when

61. ibid.
62. Harley, op.cit., p.105

she spoke to them also spent money on commercialised leisure. In fact, the leisure habits of unemployed girls did not differ at all from those of girls who were in employment. Harley interviewed 56 girls who were unemployed and all of these visited the cinema at least once a week; 25 out of the 56 visited the cinema, on average, twice a week and a further 11 girls visited the cinema between three and six times a week. In addition, 13 unemployed girls went dancing regularly.[63]

Harley was clearly astounded by the above discovery. 'A question which comes to mind at once', she pointed out,

> is how they can afford to go to the pictures so often, since they are earning no wages and, in many cases, come from homes where the financial position is bad... Presumably they are given money for amusements by their parents.64

It may be that unemployed girls had the same attitude about their unemployment benefit as older teenage girls had about their wage packets; that is, they may simply have handed over a certain amount to their parents. The point which needs to be stressed, however, is that the leisure habits of a teenage girl did not change when she became unemployed; she still went to the cinema and to dance halls even when she was unemployed.

63. id., pp.151-157.
64. id., p.157.

The main reason why unemployment had no effect on the leisure habits of teenage girls in Manchester was that this age-group only experienced short bouts of unemployment. Teenage wage-earners of both sexes in inter-war Manchester were rarely unemployed for more than a few days at a time and it was exceptional for a teenage girl or boy to be unemployed for more than three to four weeks continuously, as we saw in Chapter 3.[65] Even in cities where youth unemployment was a serious problem, however, such as in Glasgow, Cardiff and Liverpool, unemployed youths still visited cinemas regularly. An investigation which was carried out under the aegis of the Carnegie U.K.Trust in the late '30s revealed that 80% of unemployed youths in the above three cities visited the cinema at least once a week and a further 25% went more often.[66]

In Manchester, the only obstacle which prevented a minority of teenage wage-earners from attending cinemas or dance halls regularly was work. Most of the girls Harley interviewed in 1935 finished work on weekday evenings before 6pm; 73% of her sample, in fact, worked between 8am and 6pm on weekdays. Her sample included girls who worked in a range of manual occupations (box-makers, machinists, packers and printers, for instance); a few who worked in the service sector either as shop assistants or domestic servants and a

65.See above, pp.168-170.
66.C.Cameron et.al., op.cit., pp.100-9.

few who worked in offices.[67] Nearly all of the girls Harley spoke to (95% of her sample of 169 girls) had finished work by 7pm. on weekday evenings which meant that the vast majority had between three and three and a half hours free time for leisure every evening.[68] Only 12 girls in her sample worked excessively long hours on weekdays.[69]

Three groups of young workers who did work excessively long hours in the 1930s were: van boys, page boys in cinemas and girls who worked as cinema usherettes. A report by Manchester University Settlement into the hours worked by 27 local van boys in the mid-'30s revealed that all 27 worked between 46 and 70 hours a week.[70] As part of the same enquiry, the hours worked by seven local cinema page boys were also investigated; five of these were found to be working 60 hours or more a week and one boy was working 84 hours a week as a cinema page boy.[71]

Excessively long hours were not the norm, however, among teenage workers locally. Most of the girls Harley interviewed, it appears, had between three and three and a half hours each weekday evening for leisure and the authors of a survey

67. Harley, op.cit., p.59.
68. ibid.
69. ibid.
70. See the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Hours of Employment of Young Persons in Certain Unregulated Occupations, March 1937, Cmd.5394, London 1937, Section IV, p.12.
71. id., p.20.

of 'adolescent leisure' in Hulme in 1939 calculated that the 'working boys' and 'working girls' of Hulme had between four and five hours leisure time each weekday evening, although this did include time for meals and travel and also time which was spent performing household duties.[72] Nevertheless, only 'working girls' between the ages of 14 and 17 spent a significant amount of their free time during the week performing household duties, according to the authors of this survey.[73] 'Working girls' between the ages of 17 and 21, on the other hand, spent hardly any of their free time performing duties and duties ceased altogether for boys as soon as they started work at 14.[74] Between the ages of 14 and 17, therefore, 'working boys' probably had about an hour or so more leisure time each evening than 'working girls'; but between the ages of 17 and 21 both sexes spent almost the same amount of time each evening pursuing leisure activities.[75]

The various leisure activities pursued by the 'working boys' and 'working girls' of Hulme were almost identical from about the age of 17 up to the age of 21. They both spent approximately 50% of their effective leisure time

72. James and Moore, op.cit., pp.139-140.
73. id., p.140.
74. id., pp.139-140.
75. ibid.

on weekday evenings talking in groups on street corners; another 30% inside a cinema and the remainder of the time at dance halls, clubs and reading and listening to the radio.[76] This survey, it should be remembered, only took account of leisure activities which were pursued between Monday and Friday. The amount of time spent at cinemas and dance halls would undoubtedly have been greater had Saturday evening been included. But the way the cinema and dance halls monopolised the leisure time of 'working boys' and 'working girls' is still evident in the above statistics.

The world of commercialised entertainment was also beginning to transform the street activities of teenage wage-earners, too, by the late '30s. In order to participate in the Sunday evening 'monkey parade', an activity which was originally devised as an alternative to spending money on leisure, the possession of money and flashy clothes were now regarded as prerequisites. The 'monkey parade' in Harpurhey, Manchester, in the late '30s was no different from a commercial dance hall:

> The boys dressed in their thirty bob suits with 22 inch trouser bottoms,

76. ibid.

> would stroll along emulating the screen tough guys of the day...James Cagney and George Raft. They would flirt with and chat up the girls in their coats or frocks with the padded shoulder look, sporting the feminine hairstyles of the day,

according to Frank Findley who grew up in Harpurhey, during the 1930s.[77] One of his friends, he claimed, would spend as much as five to six pounds on a suit to wear for 'the parade' on Sunday evenings.[78] The parade was not a seasonal activity; it lasted all the year round. Occasionally, on cold winter evenings it would be called off but those who usually participated in it would pursue some other activity which involved spending money. 'If the weather was cold', Findley recalls,

> we could always go and fortify ourselves in Turner's temperance bar or Gottelli's ice cream shop with a good, hot, highly potent drink of VIMTO at two-pence a shot.79

The 'monkey parade' in Harpurhey only survived as an adjunct to the cinemas and dance halls as long as these institutions remained closed on Sundays. When Harpurhey's

77. F.T.Findley, Days That Used To Be, Manchester 1976 (typescript), p.22; the unpublished memoirs of Frank Findley, born in August 1922 in Harpurhey, Manchester. This working-class autobiography is in M.C.R.L., Local History Library.
78. ibid.See, also, D.Thompson, 'Courtship and Marriage in Preston between the Wars', O.H., Volume 3, No.2, 1975, pp.39-44.Young wage-earners in inter-war Preston also spent substantial amounts on new clothes for 'the parade'. 'They used to put their new suits on... and walk up and down Fishergate... it were a mass... wi' young people. No owd uns were there'.(id., p.42).
79. Findley, op.cit., p.23.

cinemas finally opened on Sundays, during the Second World War, the 'monkey parade' disappeared altogether.[80]

In conclusion, then, this chapter has shown that a distinctive teenage culture, based upon access to commercialised leisure and on the conspicuous consumption of leisure products and services which were clearly aimed at the young as much as at adults, was certainly evident in cities like Manchester as early as the 1920s and the 1930s. Neither the teenager who had 'money to spend' on leisure, nor the manufacturer or leisure entrepreneur who was interested in exploiting the teenage market, were post-war developments, therefore, as Abrams claimed in 1959 and as historians and sociologists writing in the wake of Abrams have been prepared to accept.

Teenage wage-earners in working-class families, girls as well as boys, benefitted most from the enormous expansion of commercialised leisure in the inter-war period and were also chiefly responsible for what Robert Roberts called 'the new permissiveness' after 1918.[81] Robert Roberts's father test-

80. ibid.
81. R.Roberts, Classic Slum, op.cit., pp.181-182. See also Rowntree, op.cit, Chapters XIII and XV. When Rowntree wrote his first social survey of working-class families in York in 1899 the leisure horizons of working-class youths were incredibly circumscribed; they spent most of their free evenings 'lounging about in the neighbourhood of their homes or promenading up and down certain streets in the city', according to Rowntree. The leisure horizons of working-class youths in the mid-'30s, however, were no longer simply restricted to the street or to the neighbourhood. They now went to cinemas, theatres and dance halls regularly and at weekends and on summer evenings many of them, Rowntree wrote, 'are bicycling in the country' (p.470).

ified to this. He strove desperately to maintain a 'respectable household' during the dancing boom of the 1920s (he said the new dancing rooms held 'the scum of the nation'), but both his teenage daughter and his teenage son were defiant. His teenage daughter, Janie, went dancing until 11pm some evenings and Robert found a 'den' well away from home and 'joined the dancing millions of the time'.[82]

That young wage-earners were the chief beneficiaries of the breakthroughs in commercialised entertainment in the 1920s and 1930s is reflected in the marriage statistics locally for the inter-war period. Late marriages were the norm among young people under 25 locally before the Second World War; but, after the War, far more young people of both sexes were married by the age of 25.[83] Thus, whilst only 1.4% of 15-19 year old girls in the city were married in 1931, 4.4% of girls in this age-group were in 1951 and 7.3% in 1961. The tendency for girls to marry later in the inter-war period than in the post-war period is more apparent among girls between the ages of 20 and 24 (inclusive). Only 22.9% of 20-24 year old girls locally were married in 1931 but more than twice as many, 47.7%, were in 1951 and more than half of the age-group (54%) were in 1961. The same trend is apparent among boys locally. In 1931,

82. R.Roberts, Classic Slum, op.cit., pp.188-192; id., Ragged Schooling, op.cit., pp.209-10.
83. See Tables 9 and 10, Appendix for the following statistics.

less than 1% of the 15-19 year old boys locally were married and less than 1% were in 1921. But, in 1961, almost 2% of the age-group were married. Only 14% of 20-24 year old boys locally were married in 1931 but almost twice as many, 26%, were in 1951 and nearly a third of the age-group (30.7%) in 1961. These statistics show quite clearly the tendency for young people of both sexes locally to marry later in the 1920s and 1930s than in the 1950s and 1960s. The main reason for this, according to oral accounts of the inter-war period, is that the 15-25 age-group were enjoying their leisure time too much to even contemplate marriage. As one weaver, interviewed about his youth in the inter-war period, put it:

> I can't weigh these young 'uns up;
> they want to end their lives befoor
> they've started 'em. They're savin' up
> fer an 'ouse afore they've left schoo'.
> Why don't they 'ave their fun first
> like we did ? 84

All the social investigators who studied the income and expenditure of working-class families in this period emphasised that teenage wage-earners especially found the time and money to spend significant amounts on commercialised entertainment. Some, as we saw earlier, even implied that young wage-earners who kept a substantial portion of their earnings were contributing to the poverty in certain families. It is important to point out that families who had

84.Cited in Thompson, op.cit., p.43.

teenage wage-earners, as well as an adult wage-earner, were unlikely to be in dire poverty in this period and were certainly likely to be better-off than families who were dependant on a single adult earner. Thus, in families where there were teenage wage-earners, as well as an adult wage-earner, teenage wage-earners probably found themselves with quite generous amounts of disposable income, especially older teenage wage-earners.[85] Also, in families where the chief wage-earner was perhaps out of work, teenage wage-earners were probably shielded from having to support the family entirely after 1920. The unemployment insurance scheme, which was radically extended to include most manual workers in 1920, provided a safety net for families who, before the War, would have been completely dependent on the income of supplementary wage-earners. Teenage wage-earners in such families probably had a certain amount of disposable income, therefore, after 1920; but, before the War, they probably had little, if any, disposable income.[86] The inter-war period, therefore, was probably the

85. See, in particular, the case studies in Rowntree, op.cit., Chapter XIII which support this argument.
86. For an essay which adds support to this view, see W.Seccombe, 'Patriarchy stabilised: the construction of the male bread-winner wage norm in nineteenth century Britain', S.H., Volume 11, No.1, January 1986, pp.53-76. On the safety net provided by the unemployment insurance scheme after 1920, see P. Johnson, Saving and Spending: The Working-class Economy in Britain 1870-1939, Oxford 1985, p.193. Johnson says nothing in his book about the spending patterns of teenage wage-earners in working-class families.

first time that a substantial number of teenage wage-earners in Britain found themselves with a significant amount of 'money to spend' on leisure.

CHAPTER 5: THE YOUNGER GENERATION'S 'UNHAPPY CRAZE FOR EXCITEMENT': YOUNG WAGE-EARNERS AND THE CINEMA.

It was argued in Chapter 4 that the teenager with 'money to spend' and leisure entrepreneurs and advertisers who encouraged teenagers to part with their disposable income did not suddenly appear in British society in the 1950s, as sociologists like Simon Frith and historians of working-class culture like Richard Hoggart have led us to believe.[1] These phenomena had their roots in the inter-war period and perhaps even further back in time.[2] Likewise, authority figures' anxieties about well-paid working-class youths also surfaced in Britain long before the Teddy boy appeared on Britain's streets, as this chapter aims to show through a case study of the protracted public debate over cinemas in the inter-war period and what was termed their 'deleterious' influence on young people.

Of the pressure groups that were opposed to cinemas on the grounds that they did adversely affect young people,

1. See Chapter 4, passim; Frith, op.cit., passim; Hoggart, op.cit., Chapter 8(A).
2. See, for instance, Springhall, Coming, op.cit., Chapter 4. Springhall argues that the 'penny gaffs' in Victorian London were 'almost uniquely, a recreational and cultural form characteristic of the Victorian urban working-class young alone' (p.128). This was not, however, the case in Manchester. See above p. 230ff 47.

two in particular stand out: youth leaders and the clergy. Cinema historians have so far had little to say about why these two groups and especially youth leaders were such vociferous critics of the cinema.[3] This chapter will partly aim to fill this gap. It will also aim to say more than cinema historians have so far done about why young wage-earners, of both sexes, visited the cinema so frequently; the types of films young wage-earners went to see and whether they felt that certain films did affect them.

One of the first critics of the British cinema to point to its harmful influence on children and young people was the Chief Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools at the Home Office; the former Manchester youth leader, Charles Russell. In a pamphlet study published in 1917, he argued that cinemas were indirectly responsible for boys committing certain crimes. He wrote:

> The harm done [by the cinema] is indisputable... the picture-theatre has so irresistible an attraction for children that some of them will go to the length of stealing money to provide the price of admission... 4

3. Jeffrey Richards focuses mainly on the cinema's impact upon children in his book, The Age Of The Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain 1930-1939, London 1984, Chapter 4. So, too, does Audrey Field in her book, Picture Palace: A Social History of the Cinema, London 1974, Chapters 3 and 4. The reasons why youth leaders, especially, were such vociferous critics of cinemas are also, surprisingly, not dealt with by Rachael Low. See, for instance, her latest volume, R.Low, The History of the British Film 1929-1939: Film Making in 1930s Britain, London 1985, Chapter 4.
4. C.E.B.Russell, The Problem of Juvenile Crime, Oxford 1917, pp.5-6.

He continued:

> Thoughts of burglary are, without doubt, put into boys' minds and in some places gangs of juvenile thieves try to emulate the exploits of their cinema heroes. 5

Russell also believed that boys who frequently visited cinemas suffered physically from the experience. They suffered firstly, he believed, from eye strain; and secondly from what he termed 'undue excitement' which, he argued, undermined their health.[6] Finally, Russell argued that, in addition to promoting criminal activity among boys and being physically harmful to some, cinemas and the films they screened had an insidious impact upon most boys. As he put it:

> whilst, I believe there is little that is actually immoral in most of the pictures... their vulgarity and silliness, and the distorted, unreal, Americanised (in the worst sense) view of life presented must have a deteriorating effect, and lead, at the best, to the formation of false ideals. 7

The Home Secretary in 1916-17, Herbert Samuel, shared Russell's view of cinemas. In a letter to the Hornsea Watch Committee for Licensing and Public Morality, in November 1916, he pointed out that information obtained from Chief

5. ibid.
6. ibid.
7. ibid.

Constables and other authorities at a conference held at the Home Office in April 1916:

> suggests that not infrequently children are led to commit offences as a result of seeing detailed representations of crimes on the cinematograph. 8

Throughout 1916, the Home Secretary had met numerous bodies who were concerned about:

> the objectional nature of some of the cinematograph films which [were] exhibited to the public,

and particularly to children and adolescents.[9] In May 1916, he had told the House of Commons that:

> From information obtained from the principal towns, it appears that there has been a considerable increase in juvenile offences during the past year, and it is generally believed that one of the causes is to be found in the character of some of the films shown at the cinematograph theatres. 10

Consequently, he fully endorsed an independent enquiry into the:

8. P.R.O., HO 179/312,491/20.
9. P.R.O.,HO 179/Entry Books relating to Entertainments and Theatres in the years 25 July 1910-31 December 1921, passim.
10. Hansard (Parl.Debs.), Fifth Series, Volume LXXXII, 1916, London 1916, col.132

> physical, social, moral and educational influence of the cinema, with special reference to young people

to be carried out by the National Council of Public Morals (N.C.P.M.) in 1917.[11]

This pressure group, which produced a 400 page report on the so-called 'deleterious' effects of the cinema on young people late in 1917, included on its organising committee prominent youth leaders such as Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Chief Scout; a representative from the Y.M.C.A.; representatives from the Sunday School Union; the Salvation Army; the National Union of Teachers; the L.C.C. Education Committee; the Child Study Society; the Jewish Community; the Ragged School Union and prominent churchmen such as the Bishop of Birmingham, who was the Chairman.[12] A number of those who sat on this Committee, then, were staunch advocates of what, for convenience sake, might be termed 'rational recreation' for young people.

Only two representatives from Manchester gave evidence before the Committee: Spurley Hey, the Director of Education in the city and the Bishop of the city, Bishop Welldon. Spurley Hey had interviewed 193 boys during 1917 and found that 83% of these visited the cinema once or twice a week and another 5% visited cinemas even more frequently (three or four times

11. P.R.O., HO 179/312, 397/124; Richards, op.cit, p.70.
12. See N.C.P.M., The Cinema: Its Present Position and Future Possibilities, London 1917, pp.viii-ix.

a week). Only 11% of Spurley Hey's sample never visited cinemas. He told the N.C.P.M. Committee:

> I am quite sure that certain crimes have been committed to some extent as the result of visits to picture houses..,

but he provided no evidence to support his argument and contradicted himself later on by pointing out that:

> it is difficult to say how many children are saved from committing crimes by being in picture houses.[13]

Bishop Welldon's testimony was briefer than Spurley Hey's but more consistent. He believed that the cinema was an invaluable mechanism for educating young people and had no criticisms to make about the cinema whatsoever.[14]

Much of the evidence presented before the Committee was impressionistic and not substantiated by statistical proof. Much of it, like the evidence referred to above, was either contradictory or vague. Even Chief Constables were divided over the issue of whether or not the cinema was to blame for the so-called juvenile 'crime wave' in 1916-17. The Chief Constables of Caernarvonshire, Leeds, Liverpool,

13. id, pp.161, 166-7.
14. id., pp.242-3.

Middlesborough and Newcastle-upon-Tyne believed that the cinema was, in one way or another, largely responsible for the wartime increase in the juvenile crime rate. But the Chief Constable of Manchester, Robert Peacock, believed that the juvenile crime-rate had increased during the war because the fathers of those at risk were away fighting and their mothers were either unable or unwilling to discipline their children. Such conflicting views were aired in The Police Review throughout 1916 and at the Annual Conference of the Chief Constables' Association in May 1916, which was mainly devoted to a discussion about juvenile crime.[15]

The evidence which the 1917 Committee heard from police and legal experts was naturally, therefore, highly inconsistent. On the one hand, there were alarmist statements by highly respected individuals like Cecil Leeson, the Secretary of the Howard Association who was also a probation officer in Birmingham. He claimed that many cinema films:

> make children, whose thoughts should be happy and wholesome, familiar with ideas of death by exhibiting shootings, stabbings, and the like.16

15. See The Police Review and parade gossip: organ of the British Constabulary, 31 March 1916; id., 20 April 1916; id., 12 May 1916; id., 19 May 1916; id., 2 June 1916. M.C.R.L., Social Sciences Library, has copies of this newspaper covering the period from 1893, the year it was launched, to 1919. But for the period from 1920 to 1939, the paper was consulted in the British Library Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.
16. N.C.P.M., op.cit., p.187.

On the other hand, there were more considered and contrasting statements from the same profession, such as the following statement by the probation officer at Old Street Court in London:

> The films chiefly complained of, crime and 'crook' films, have, in my opinion, little if anything to do with the increase in juvenile crime. Let any keen observer attend a cinema when a 'crook' film and detective story is shown and listen to the children's cheers when the crook has been run to earth and punished. 17

In the end, the Committee reinforced this view and gave short shrift to alarmist statements which suggested, or implied, that the cinema was to blame for the so-called juvenile 'crime-wave'. In their summary of the evidence, they described cases where juveniles had apparently committed copycat crimes as 'exceptional' and pointed out that boys who allegedly stole money in order to gain admission to a cinema might simply have stolen money in order to buy sweets, 'penny dreadfuls', or 'any objects on which their hearts are set'.[18] 'Juveniles' convicted of theft always told the court that they stole in order to obtain money to visit the cinema, because they knew that they would be treated more leniently for saying this. Yet as Roderick Ross, the perceptive Chief Constable of Edinburgh, explained to the Committee:

17. id., p.219.
18. id., pp.xxxiv-xxxviii.

> Independent of the cinema, boys will continue to steal and to devote the proceeds of their dishonesty to whatever purpose may take their fancy.

He found that,in Edinburgh, 'the proceeds of juvenile theft' invariably were frittered away on their 'fondness or craze for gambling'.[19] Ross's evidence before the Committee evidently impressed them because his statement was circulated to all the Chief Constables in the United Kingdom, the majority of whom, it was stated in the N.C.P.M.'s final report, generally agreed with his comments on the relationship between cinemas and the juvenile crime-rate. The N.C.P.M., therefore, merely reiterated what Ross had said. He had told the Committee that in Edinburgh:

> the cinema... as a means of inciting the commission of crime on the part of juveniles has had little or no effect on the crime committed by children and young persons.

The Committee concluded that:

> while a connection between the cinema and crime has to a limited extent in special cases been shown,...it certainly has not been proved that the increase in juvenile crime generally has been consequent on the cinema... 20

19. id., pp.176-7.
20. id., pp.176-7, xxxvii-xxxviii.

The N.C.P.M.'s report was sent to the Home Secretary at the end of 1917. Its main conclusion about the relationship, or rather lack of it, between the cinema and the juvenile crime rate persuaded the Home Secretary that there was no need for a state censorship of films which children and young people went to see.[21] This went against the recommendations of pressure groups like the Chief Constables' Association, which had been campaigning for state censorship of cinematograph films since 1916, arguing that:

> the establishment of a central government censor of cinematograph films is essential, and will conduce to the reduction of juvenile crime in the country. 22

At the start of the inter-war period, therefore, those in authority and even those who worked in the same profession, were still deeply divided over the whole issue of whether or not cinemas and the films shown in them were to blame for the criminal acts committed by male youths in particular. The N.C.P.M. report convinced the Home Secretary that there was no cause for alarm but, because many of the witnesses who gave evidence before this Committee presented

21.P.R.O.,HO 179/Entry Books, op.cit., passim.
22.Police Review, 19 May 1916.

conflicting reports about the cinema's influence on children and young people, the report was by no means a severe blow to critics of the cinema. Even Roderick Ross's statement, which the authors of the Report said they attached great importance to, included comments which critics of the cinema could have used as ammunition to support their case. In short, Ross's statement was ambivalent. On the one hand he said:

> In some quarters it has been alleged that the exhibition of films which showed burglars and other criminals at work have been the means in inciting boys to emulate the example... No such case has come to my knowledge or to the knowledge of my detective officers.

But he then pointed out:

> I... consider that there is grave danger in such representations. Boys are generally of an adventurous disposition, and ever ready to emulate anything in the way of an example... For this reason I am decidedly opposed to representations of such a nature being shown to the young. 23

The Home Office withdrew from the cinema debate after 1917, but re-entered it when concern about the cinema's 'deleterious influence' on 'youth' mounted again in the early 1930s.[24] Outside London, however, concern about the cinema's influence on children and young people continued to be voiced after 1917. In Manchester, for instance, a local branch of the

23.N.C.P.M., op.cit., pp.176-7.
24.See below, p. 281.

National Council of Women set up a committee, in May 1927, which campaigned vigorously (but unsuccessfully) to have Children's Matinee performances show only films which had been awarded a 'U' certificate and to have all 'A' films shown in Children's Matinees locally removed from public circulation.[25]

Prominent among the critics of the cinema in the 1920s and 1930s were youth leaders. The most famous youth leader of the day, Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell, included a subtle attack on the cinemagoing habit among teenage boys in his book Rovering to Success, 98,000 copies of which had been printed and sold by 1930. He wrote in the 1930 edition:

> One little form of 'fun' in which I sometimes indulge myself when I have had too long a day in office or at committee work, is to go to - for goodness' sake don't tell anyone - a music hall or a cinema.
>
> I know that I shall be told by respectable folk that this is most degrading. Well, I can't help it. No man expects to be perfect.
>
> I have been urging ACTIVE change of occupation as your best form of recreation. I have no defence for this occasional lapsing into being passively amused by others. 26

25. See the Minutes of the Child and the Cinema Meetings held at the local branch of the N.C.W. during 1927, M.C.R.L., Archives Department (M271/Box 5).
26. See Rovering To Success: A Book of Life-Sport for Young Men, by Lord Baden-Powell of Gilwell, London 1930, p.82.

Baden-Powell then went on to point out that he invariably fell asleep whenever he visited a cinema because too often the story was 'rotten'.[27] His main objection to the new 'super cinemas,' which showed 'talking' films, was that he was not able to fall asleep so easily in these institutions.[28]

Lilian Russell, the President of Heyrod Street Lads' Club in Manchester and the widow of Charles Russell, was far more forthright than Baden-Powell in attacking the 'cinema habit' among working boys of 14 to 18. She wrote in 1932:

> The cinema-play, though not exactly vicious, is often very low in tone, giving young people who frequent it an altogether false and vulgar, foolishly sentimental and in the worst sense, Americanised view of life. It is not the single 'talkie' drama that does the harm but the cumulative effect of many which affect the impressionable mind... [29]

Lilian Russell believed, as her husband had done, that once boys fell into the habit of visiting the cinema regularly, many of them would turn to crime in order to pay for their outings to the cinema. 'We have seen not a few weak-willed young fellows in prison', she went on to point out:

27. id., pp.82-3.
28. id., p.83.
29. C.E.B.Russell and L.M.Russell, Lads' Clubs: Their History, Organisation And Management, London 1932, p.215. In this statement, Lilian Russell was of course reiterating the fears her husband had voiced in 1917; but she embellished his original comments and was, if anything, more concerned than he had been about the cinema's corrupting influence on young people.

> who have been convicted for thefts committed, as they confessed, to get money 'to buy some tabs and go to the pictures'. 30

The Russells were not exceptional among local youth leaders in believing that cinemas and many of the films shown in them were potentially harmful to young people. As early as December 1915, the officials at Hugh Oldham Lads' Club joined forces with a clergyman from the neighbouring area and complained to the Chief Constable of Manchester about 'the notorious character' of the film Five Nights which was being shown at a cinema close to the club. They feared that many of the club's members, who were known to frequent this cinema, might see the film.[31]

In Denis Gifford's exhaustive catalogue of British films released between 1895 and 1970, the film Five Nights is described as a 'Romance'. Yet the film was apparently banned by many local authorities.[32] In Manchester, the youth leaders and the clergyman won their appeal. The Chief Constable of Manchester and his Watch Committee, the censorship committee in the city, removed the offending film from public circulation. Furthermore, the cinema manager who showed the film was subsequently taken to court by the local youth leaders. They won

30. ibid.
31. Hugh Oldham Lads' Club (H.O.L.C.), Minute Book, 1 March 1915-7 November 1921, M.C.R.L., Archives Department (M7/1/5). See the Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on December 1, 1915.
32. D.Gifford, The British Film Catalogue 1895-1970: A Guide to Entertainment Films, Devon 1973, 05606.

the case and were awarded £3-4 costs which they spent on books for their club library.[33]

The above episode is a good illustration of a conflict that was to become far more embittered in the 1930s: a conflict of interests between clergymen and youth leaders on the one hand, who believed passionately that working boys should 'use' their leisure time pursuing 'rational recreation' under the caring guidance of a youth movement; and cinema managers on the other, who believed that all working boys wanted in their leisure time was entertainment and escapism.

During the 1920s, local youth leaders and other 'rational recreationists' seem not to have entered into a public conflict with cinema managers. But this was probably only because a convenient situation did not arise for the two to express their different ideas about leisure in public. Nevertheless, 'rational recreationists' continued to criticise cinemas and, implicitly, their managers. At a conference on 'The Leisure of the People' held at the Municipal College of Technology in Manchester, in November 1919, the advocates of rational recreation for young people were given a golden opportunity to outline their criticisms of the cinema and to propose alternatives. On the former subject, their criticisms

33.H.O.L.C., Minute Book, op.cit.

tended to be savage, colourful, but extremely vague attacks. For instance, Mr.C.G.Ammon, the Organising Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers, referred to:

> the sloppiness and sensationalism of the kinema, the extravagances and inanities of..jazz, and the bestiality of the public house. 34

Another speaker, Dr.Arthur H.Norris, a member of the Home Office Juvenile Organisations Committee, felt that the free time of an adolescent presented 'immense possibilities for good or evil'.[35]

One of the few speakers who proposed a viable alternative to the cinema for young people was Alderman J.H. Lloyd from Birmingham. He suggested that local authorities should build Winter Gardens to draw young people away from dingy cinemas:

> The Winter Garden I have in mind is a place where there will be cafés, reading rooms, and libraries, concert rooms, lecture halls, and billiard rooms, and a Repertory Theatre... There should be provision for recreation in the open air, such as bowls, cricket, etc, alfresco concerts, and pleasant shady walks where young couples can lose themselves - if you don't provide the means they will find them themselves, probably under worse conditions. 36

34. The Leisure of the People, A Handbook, Manchester 1920, p.15.
35. id., pp.45-6.
36. id., pp.18-19.

Although the speaker was a little vague about the potential dangers young people faced if such ambitious schemes did not materialise, Dr.Arthur Norris spelt out the probable consequences in his speech. The 'growing boy', he argued, would spend his free time:

> with other restless spirits in places... which are harmful to himself... in mischief, in petty or even serious crime. 37

The cinema was again attacked as a corrupting influence on local youngsters in 1929. An official at Heyrod Street Lads' Club pointed out in the club's annual report for that year:

> Many of the films shown at the cinemas which our lads attend are positively harmful. 38

Baden-Powell wrote in the same year:

> The public mind is largely occupied today with cinema stars... and murders... it is thanks to this interest in false values that the nation is suffering today under its many ills. 39

37. id., pp. 45-6.
38. Heyrod Street Men's and Lads' Club, Ancoats, Annual Report 1929, p.10., M.C.R.L., Local History Library.
39. Sir Robert Baden-Powell, Scouting and Youth Movements, London 1929, p.7.

The golden opportunity for local critics of the cinema to confront cinema managers head on, however, came in January 1933, when the City Council first discussed whether local cinemas should be allowed to open on Sundays.

The cinema's supposedly corrupting influence over young people would, we might think, be peripheral to this debate. The important issues would surely be that Sunday cinemas would draw people - adults as well as youngsters - away from the church; that cinema employees should not be forced to work on Sundays and that cinema managers should not be allowed to make money out of people on the one day of the week that most people did not work. The one issue which dominated the debate, however, was whether cinemas in general were a good or a bad influence on local youngsters.[40]

Among those councillors who were opposed to Sunday cinemas was Alderman West, who pointed out at the City Council meeting:

> our younger generation is not sufficiently serious-minded... I consider it would be disastrous to pander still further to this unhappy craze for excitement and amusement by sanctioning Sunday cinemas. 41

40. See, in particular, the following issues of the local and national press: M.E.Ch.(L), 6 December 1932; id., 3 January 1933; M.E.N. (L), 4 January 1933; D.D. (N), 5 January 1933; M.C.N. (L), 7 January 1933; D.H.(N), 25 November 1932; M.G. (N), 19 January 1933. The titles are given here in abbreviated form. For reference, see Index of Abbreviations, pp.iii-iv above.
41. M.C.N., 7 January 1933.

His view was shared by Councillor Richardson, a church warden, who felt that if local cinemas were allowed to open on Sunday evenings, 'promenading', that 'excellent custom' which gave young people 'an opportunity to converse with each other after church', would die out.[42] Finally, Councillor Ackroyd who introduced the motion not to allow local cinemas to open on Sundays opposed Sunday opening partly, he said, because,

> the large number of organisations whose work amongst our young children is one of Manchester' greatest assets,

would suffer; 'never', he argued,

> was there a time when they needed more encouragement and protection. 43

He also suggested, without providing an ounce of evidence, that many of the films which would be screened on Sundays would be 'harmful and unsavoury' and many would expose young people to:

> calamitous views of the institutions of marriage, the home and the family. 44

42. M.E.N., 4 January 1933.
43. M.C.N., 7 January 1933.
44. ibid.

Such arguments proved sufficient to convince a substantial majority of local councillors that Manchester cinemas should not be allowed to open on Sundays: 73 councillors voted against Sunday opening and only 17 voted for it.[45] In Salford, where the local City Council also debated the issue in January 1933, the debate was not so one-sided, but a motion to introduce Sunday opening in Salford was still defeated by 6 votes.[46] Elsewhere in the North-West and other parts of the country, too, cinema managers who requested permission to open on Sundays invariably lost the argument to sabbatarians and advocates of 'rational recreation'. In Stoke-on-Trent, for instance, 3,000 angry protesters sang hymns outside the City Council chamber, contributing to the defeat of a motion to open cinemas on Sundays there.[47] In Croydon, a large yellow flag, emblazoned with the words 'Hold on to your Sunday' was pinned to one of the local churches when the issue was being debated by the local council. Other posters, too, were hung up around this church, calling upon the mothers of Croydon to 'Guard Your Children's Heritage' and 'Vote Against Sunday Cinemas'.[48]

45. M.E.N., 4 January 1933.
46. ibid.
47. D.D., 23 November 1932.
48. N.C. (N), 26 November 1932. In Croydon, local ratepayers voted in favour of Sunday cinemas; but they were rejected either by local ratepayers or the town council in Oldham, Northampton, Rochdale and Sidcup in Kent. See, for instance, M.G., 22 December 1932; id., 6 December 1932; D.D., 14 January 1933; M.E.Ch., 6 December 1932.

The Sunday opening issue was next debated by Manchester City Council in December 1937. But, once again, a proposal to open local cinemas on Sundays was resoundingly defeated by 72 votes to 26.[49] Because the debate was rushed at this meeting, Councillor Fitzsimons, who introduced the motion, succeeded in having the issue debated again, in March 1939. When he introduced the motion again, on 1 March 1939, one of his main arguments for Sunday opening was that it would:

> do away with large numbers of young people... having to wander the streets aimlessly. 50

Again, however, the proposal was resoundingly defeated, in the main by sabbatarians and trade unionists.[51]

The Lord's Day Observance Society played a key role in rallying sabbatarian opposition to the motion. A few days before the City Council debate, this pressure group sent a letter outlining why they were opposed to Sunday cinemas to every member of Manchester City Council. In addition, many local clergymen who belonged to the Lord's Day Observance Society said why they were opposed to Sunday cinemas in their sermons on the Sunday preceding the City Council debate.[52]

49. D.D., 14 February 1939.
50. M.E.N., 1 March 1939.
51. M.G., 2 March 1939.
52. M.E.Ch., 27 February 1939.

Furthermore, they urged their congregations to write to their local councillor, expressing their opposition to Sunday cinemas.[53] This propaganda campaign proved highly effective. When the issue was debated by the City Council again on 1 March 1939 a motion to open local cinemas on Sundays was resoundingly defeated by 79 votes to 14.[54]

Manchester City Council again blocked a proposal to open local cinemas on Sundays in March 1940. This proposal was put forward by the military authorities who were stationed in Manchester and it had the support of the local Watch Committee. Brigadier Drew, who was in charge of the Western Command Force stationed in Manchester, wrote to the local Watch Committee pointing out that:

> It is important... that homeless lads who are on service should have some alternative to the streets on a day when leave is common... 55

The Watch Committee agreed and asked the City Council to take measures to introduce Sunday cinemas to the city. Again, however, when the City Council debated the issue on 3 April 1940, it emphatically rejected the Watch Committee's recommendation by 94 votes to 17.[56]

53. ibid.
54. M.E.N., 1 March 1939.
55. M.G., 23 March 1940.
56. id., 3 April 1940.

A year later, Sunday cinemas were introduced to the city, but only for the duration of the war. The measure was introduced to meet the needs of young soldiers, rather than to meet the needs of local youngsters. Consequently, cinema managers were required to obey certain rules with regard to local youngsters who were under 18. Firstly, they were not to admit boys or girls who were under 16 to Sunday matinée performances because local civic leaders feared that this would sabotage the work of churches and Sunday Schools locally.[57] Secondly, they were not to show films which were only suitable for adults on Sunday evenings because the City Council were worried that the under 16s were sneaking into 'A' films unaccompanied by a parent or a guardian.[58] Finally, no 'children' under 16 were to be admitted to local cinemas on Sundays unless accompanied by an adult.[59]

This temporary arrangement prevailed throughout the war, but, soon after, the issue of whether local cinemas should be allowed to continue to open on Sundays was discussed at an open meeting in the Town Hall. The two main opponents of Sunday cinemas at this meeting were a clergyman, the Reverend Desmond Dean who was the Rector of St.Clement's church in Higher Openshaw and also the Chairman of the Manchester Sunday

57. id., 18 April 1947; M.E.N., 1 March 1944; D.H., 20 March 1944.
58. M.G., 18 April 1947.
59. ibid; M.E.N., 1 March 1944.

Defence Committee; and a local youth leader, a Miss Kennett, who was the Superintendent of the Manchester Girls' Institute in Ancoats.[60] The Reverend Dean told the 500 local citizens who attended the meeting that Sunday was a:

> spiritual oasis in a desert of week-day materialism - a gift we shall lose at our own peril. 61

He was especially worried that Sunday cinemas would be a threat to the 'welfare' and 'morals' of the young, declaring:

> What hypocrisy it is to talk about the young people having nowhere to go on Sunday nights! How long have the cinemas been showing any regard for the welfare or morals of our ... boys and girls ? 62

He continued:

> Sunday stands as almost the last national bulwark against complete materialism. If this strongpoint is swept away, is there anything can save our nation from headlong disaster ? 63

60. M.E.Ch., 21 April 1947; M.C.N., 25 April 1947.
61. M.E.Ch., 21 April 1947.
62. id., 6 May 1947.
63. ibid.

The villains in the Sunday cinema debate, according to the Reverend, naturally, were cinema managers. He described them as 'uncharitable, money-grabbing businessmen'.[64] Another local minister, a Mr.Boumphey from the Methodist Church in Wythenshawe, also spoke out against cinemas and, by implication, cinema managers at this meeting. He declared:

> During the last few years the cinemas have been open, Manchester has been going into the depths of sin and poverty. We have the churches today. We have had them for hundreds of years. Do you want the churches or cinemas ? (Roars of 'cinemas' from the audience). 65

Despite meeting with a hostile reception, he continued in the same vein:

> We open the doors of our church... for our children and we take pride in the fact that we are able to do something towards teaching children the proper ways of life... What do they get at cinemas - hooliganism and destruction... 66

The real fears of the local clergy were revealed in the speech by the local youth leader, Miss Kennett. She said that, in Ancoats,parents were sending their children to the cinemas on Sundays instead of to Sunday School and

64.ibid.
65.M.C.N., 25 April 1947.
66.ibid.

that the children were thus growing up ignorant of Christianity.[67]

On the above occasion, the critics of the cinema lost the debate: the 500 citizens who attended the meeting voted to keep Sunday cinemas.[68] But, because the meeting was poorly attended (half a million Manchester citizens had been invited to attend), the cinema's critics demanded that the local population should decide the issue in a poll.[69] The Town Clerk agreed to this since 800 local citizens, headed by the Reverend Desmond Dean, were opposed to Sunday cinemas. Consequently, the local population did decide the issue in a poll. This was held on 8 May 1947. In all, 65 polling stations were set up around the city for the purpose and the cost of the whole enterprise was between £750 and £1,000.[70] The outcome of the poll was that 17,140 local citizens voted to keep Sunday cinemas and only 7,676 people voted to get rid of them.[71]

Parliament still had to grant Manchester cinema managers the right to open on Sundays, but this was simply a formality since the Home Secretary was satisfied that the

67. ibid.
68. M.E.Ch., 21 April 1947.
69. ibid; M.C.N., 25 April 1947.
70. ibid; M.G., 9 May 1947; M.C.N., 25 April 1947.
71. M.G., 9 May 1947.

poll had been conducted fairly. Even so, when the outcome of the Manchester poll was discussed in Parliament, a local M.P., the Reverend Gordon Lang (Labour M.P. for Stalybridge and Hyde), used the opportunity to question the result of the poll. He argued that not enough polling stations had been set up around the city and that as a result:

> thousands of people in Manchester were deprived of the opportunity of saying what they wanted.

The Home Secretary, Mr.Chuter Ede, described this as:

> an altogether prejudiced and unreliable account of what actually transpired,

and in support of the Home Secretary, another local M.P., the Labour M.P. for Clayton, even suggested that a group of 'militant Christians' had 'organised congestion at the polls' which was the main reason why many people had not bothered to vote.[72] Summing up the Parliamentary debate, the Labour Home Secretary declared:

> An organised effort was made by certain people in the city - people who think that the days of Eatanswill should not be allowed to disappear - who organised a demonstration... and there was an organised effort to make the poll as difficult to take as possible... 73

72. See Hansard (Parl.Debs.), Fifth Series, Vol. 439, 1946-7, London 1947 , cols.2158-2170
73. id., col.2167.

He concluded, though, that the poll was conducted 'in accordance with precedent and tradition' and after recommending to the House that Manchester cinemas should be allowed to continue to open on Sundays, Parliament approved his decision.[74]

The above account shows why local churchmen and local youth leaders were so opposed to cinemas in general and to Sunday cinemas in particular. Both groups were profoundly worried that cinemas were undermining their own work with young people; luring them away from the church and away from youth movements. These fears were certainly justified. Youth movements that were active locally began to lose members at a dramatic rate in the early 1930s when talking films like The Perfect Alibi were attracting huge audiences locally.[75] In fact, 14 to 18 year olds were the staple audience at Hollywood gangster films and at most films by the 1930s.[76]

A number of social investigators writing in the 1930s remarked upon the poor performance of youth movements in these years and linked this to the corresponding rise of the cinemagoing 'habit', particularly among girls and boys in their teens. A.D.K.Owen obtained information on the leisure

74. id., cols.2169-2170.
75. See above, p.231 and below, Chapter 6, passim.
76. See Richards, op.cit., pp.12-15.

pursuits of 1,000 14-18s in Sheffield in 1931. He found that 72% of all the boys in the sample and 73% of all the girls visited the cinema at least once a week; but only 19% of the boys and only 11% of the girls belonged to a youth movement and less than a fifth of the sample attended church or chapel on Sundays.[77]

Rowntree discovered an identical pattern among the teenage population of York in the mid-1930s. Teenage wage-earners of both sexes flocked to cinemas, dance halls and music halls on most nights of the week, but youth movements appealed to a mere handful.[78] Rowntree, being an advocate of 'rational recreation'was as concerned about this state of affairs as Manchester youth leaders and the local clergy were. He fretted that:

> there is every temptation for them to spend their evenings in ways which... are often not helpful. Two or three nights in the week they will go to cinemas... which involves no effort or initiative on their part. Such use of leisure does not make for strength of character... 79

What evidence was there, though, that young people who visited the cinema frequently in the 1930s were resorting

77. A.D.K.Owen, A Survey of Juvenile Employment and Welfare in Sheffield, Sheffield 1933, pp.39, 41, 43.
78. Rowntree, op.cit., p.447.
79. id., p.349.

to crime, either in order to obtain money to gain admission to the cinema or as a result of gaining ideas about crime from gangster films ?

Chief Constables who still believed that the cinema was to some extent responsible for a certain amount of juvenile crime were in a distinct minority by the '30s and, whenever they tried to argue their case against the cinema, they either ended up simply criticising certain films for portraying crime or resorting to extremely questionable logic when they were trying to link the influence of the cinema with particular crimes. The Chief Constable of Wallasey adopted the former approach. In his annual report for 1936, he declared that:

> Any film that prompts a child to commit crime, teaches him to conceal stolen goods, or to evade the Police or the truth, should never be allowed to circulate. An incalculable amount of damage may be caused to the impressionable mind of a child. 80

Few Chief Constables were so extreme by the '30s, but one or two still believed that crime films did give some boys bad ideas.

80.Cited in Police Review, 21 February 1936.

> Some of the methods adopted by children for breaking into premises show extraordinary cunning and audacity,

pointed out the Chief Constable of Lancaster in his annual report for 1936. 'In other instances', he went on:

> their acts savour of the films - stolen property having been secreted in the hollow trunks of trees. 81

The Chief Constable of Leicester believed that boys learnt the rudiments of breaking and entering from the gangster films they went to see and the Chief Constable of Birkenhead stated in his annual report for 1936:

> I am convinced that the great majority of juveniles embark on... offences as 'a great adventure'; and I also believe half the trouble is caused by a desire to imitate what is seen on films, or read of in trashy literature. 82

Chief Constables who argued that the cinemas were to blame for the so-called juvenile 'crime-wave' across the country in the mid-'30s produced little or no concrete evidence that this was the case. Their arguments were based simply on unproven assumptions about the monocausal relationship

81. id., 13 March 1936.
82. id., 28 February 1936.

between crimes portrayed in films and crimes committed by 'juveniles'. The pressure groups that campaigned against the cinema in the '30s relied on even more doubtful evidence when discussing the cinema's adverse effects on 'adolescents'. The Birmingham Cinema Enquiry Committee produced, in Jeffrey Richards' words, 'a highly impressionistic case for the prosecution'. In their report on the effects of the cinema on 1,439 'children' and 'adolescents', published in 1931, they singled out the following cases:

> One child said she would show me how to strangle people, remarks one commissioner. There is a boy who revels in burglar films and says 'Only potty children are frightened'. 'The picture taught me how to shoot' says another boy. Many describe in detail gory incidents. 83

Such dubious use of the evidence contained in questionnaires that 'children' and 'adolescents' completed for middle-class investigators, undoubtedly weakened the latter's case against the cinema. This is abundantly clear from the debates in Parliament on the issue of the so-called juvenile 'crime-wave' in the '30s. The cinema's critics were invariably given extremely short shrift in these debates.

83.Cited in Richards, op.cit., p.76.

When Parliament discussed the issue of juvenile crime in April 1932 the Home Secretary, Herbert Samuel again, spoke with some authority since he had a lifetime's experience of dealing with the subject of whether cinemas were responsible for much juvenile crime. He pointed out:

> There are some who think that the cinema is another factor contributing [to the increase in crime], especially among the young... My very expert and experienced advisors at the Home Office are of the opinion that on the whole the cinema conduces more to the prevention of crime than to its commission. It keeps the boys out of mischief... In general, the Home Office's opinion is that if the cinemas had never existed there would probably be more crime than there is rather than less. 84

The most vociferous critic of the cinema in this debate was J.A.Lovat-Fraser, the National Labour M.P. for Lichfield and the Joint Honorary Secretary of the State Children's Association. But, characteristically, his argument was vague and unsupported by concrete evidence. He believed that 'an enormous number of unemployed boys' and 'imperfectly educated boys and girls' had been 'corrupted' by seeing films in which the gangster was held up as a hero. He did not say how they had been corrupted, however; only that such films had 'undoubtedly affected the youth of this country very detrimentally'.[85]

84. Hansard (Parl.Debs.), Fifth Series, Vol.264, 1931-32, London 1932, col.1141.
85. id., col.1171.

Criminologists like Dr.Cyril Burt ridiculed the arguments put forward by the cinema's critics, linking the cinemas with the juvenile crime rate. In his book The Young Delinquent, published in 1927, Burt wrote half mockingly:

> It is alleged that what is called the 'faculty of imitativeness' renders the child peculiarly prone to copy whatever he witnesses upon the screen. But... sifting the evidence adduced by those who express these fears, it is plain that both their inferences and their psychological assumptions are by no means free from fallacy. Nor are their facts better founded... The direct reproduction of serious film crimes is, in my experience, exceedingly uncommon... It is clear that in comparison with the incalculable numbers of films, the offences resulting are infinitesimally few. 86

He went on:

> I could, I think, cite more than one credible instance where the opening of a cinema had reduced hooliganism among boys, withdrawn young men from the public house, and supplied girls with a safer substitute for lounging with their friends in the alleys or the parks. 87

In Parliament, the cinema's critics were mauled once again in a debate on juvenile crime in 1938. The Attorney General, Sir Donald Somervell, delivered the most severe blow

86.Cited in R.Ford, Children in the Cinema, London 1939, pp.85-6.
87.id., p.87.

to this group. 'In any age', he perceptively noted:

> something is singled out and suggested as an excuse for such juvenile delinquency as exists. There was a Debate in this House 115 years ago on dog fights, and an Honourable Member said: 'As to the tendency of such sports, he could state the case of a boy who from attending dog fights and mixing with the society there had become perverted in character and lost to every useful purpose of society. 88

The Home Secretary during this debate, Sir Samuel Hoare, was also anxious to demolish once and for all the view that cinemas were partly responsible for the apparent increase in juvenile crime in the late '30s. He pointed out that:

> Our inquiries... show that.... today the young are not more wicked than they were, but that they are less controlled by their parents. They... show that it is not so much films and shilling shockers that make juvenile crime, but broken homes, indulgent mothers, unkind stepmothers or unemployment. 89

It would appear, then, that local youth leaders like Lilian Russell and the local clergymen who believed that much juvenile crime could be traced back to the influence of the cinema were arguing a dubious case in the 1930s. Even the Chief Constable of the city at the time never once mentioned

88. Hansard (Parl.Debs.), Fifth Series, Vol.342, 1938-9, London 1939, col.369.
89. id., col.272.

that gangster films, or the cinema in general, were to blame for the apparent increase in juvenile crime in the city in the 1930s. In fact, like Dr.Cyril Burt, he argued that the cinemas kept local youngsters out of trouble.[90]

If, as seems likely, then, local youngsters did not go to the cinema in order to pick up ideas about how to commit criminal acts, the question remains: why did the under 18s of both sexes visit cinemas so frequently ?

Visiting cinemas was the most popular pastime of teenage boys and teenage girls locally by the 1930s, as it was elsewhere in the country. Cinemagoing was more popular, however, among teenage wage-earners than among teenage schoolboys and schoolgirls. 451 boy and girl trade apprentices locally were interviewed in 1932 and 64% of the boys and 65% of the girls visited a cinema between one and three times a week. 248 boys and girls who attended local secondary schools were interviewed for the same study and only 38% of the boys and only 26% of the girls visited a cinema between one and three times a week.[91]

90. See especially City of Manchester, Watch Committee, Chief Constable's Annual Reports for 1932, 1933 and 1934. It is by no means clear that the juvenile crime rate locally was increasing in the 1930s. See above, pp.194-197.
91. See A.E.H.Fielder, 'Adolescents and the Cinema, Report of an Enquiry', Dip.Soc.Studies, Department of Economics, University of Manchester, 1932, p.5.

Joan L.Harley's study of the leisure habits of girl wage-earners in Manchester confirmed that cinemagoing was so frequent among these girls that it had taken on the force of a habit. Out of 169 girls she interviewed, 159 (or 90% of the sample) visited a cinema at least once a week, around a third went to the cinema twice a week or more and she even cited the case of a girl who went to the cinema six times a week.[92] The majority of girl wage-earners, Harley pointed out:

> go at least once a week as a matter of course and apparently regardless of the film that is being shown. 93

This pattern was further confirmed, for working boys as well as working girls, in H.E.O.James and F.T.Moore's study of 'adolescent leisure activities' in Hulme, a working-class district of the city, undertaken in the summer of 1939. They found that young wage-earners of both sexes spent about a third of their effective leisure time each week (excluding weekends) inside a cinema.[94]

92.Harley, op.cit., pp.107-109, 157.
93.id., p.107.
94.James and Moore, op.cit., pp.139-140. Hulme was only one square mile in area but it was saturated with commercialised leisure outlets for young people. There were 8 cinemas in Hulme (plus 4 on the outskirts of Hulme), 12 dance halls, 8 billiard halls and 1 variety theatre (id., p.134). In Manchester as a whole, there were 107 cinemas in 1937, 122 by 1938 and 'more than 100' in 1940. The 92 largest cinemas in the city in 1937 could seat 107,401 people and the 95 largest in 1938 could seat 111,247 people. There were approximately 93,000 14-20 year olds in the city in the 1930s so there was ample room at local cinemas for their most habitual patrons. For the above statistics, see C.Chisholm (ed.), Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom, 1937, London 1938, p.203; id., Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom, 1938, London 1939, p.210; Carter,'Youth Survey',op.cit., p.109; Census of England and Wales 1931, op.cit., Table 18.

It should not be assumed, however, that because cinemagoing was a habitual pastime among local teenage wage-earners it required little thought or 'initiative', as investigators like Rowntree argued. On the contrary, it appears that teenage wage-earners locally used the cinemas for a number of purposes. They were places they and their peer group could attend as an alternative to the street; places where rival peer groups could meet in order to 'taunt one another', and places where young male wage-earners could take their girlfriends in order to impress them (the 'posh' city centre cinemas were used for this purpose). Cinemas were also places where courting couples could indulge in heavy petting etc. in a warm, dark and relatively congenial environment.[95]

Even social investigators seem to have been aware that cinemas were used by local youngsters for their own purposes. James and Moore noted, for instance, that teenage wage-earners in Hulme went to the cinema to indulge in 'love-making', by which they presumably meant to indulge in kissing and heavy petting.[96] An investigator working for Mass Observation noted the same in Bolton. He was frankly dismayed at the 'continual petting' and 'chatting' that went on even during the film.[97] Joan L.Harley also assumed that girls who attended

95.M.S.O.H.A., Tape J214, Tape 996, Tape 1001.
96.James and Moore, op.cit., p.137.
97.Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex Library, Box W21.

Manchester cinemas very frequently did so 'to meet the boys of their neighbourhood'. 'There is proof of this', she argued,

> in the fact that quite a number of girls will see the same film twice.98

For young wage-earners, a visit to a 'posh' city centre cinema had little to do with the films that were shown in these cinemas (most of which could eventually be seen at cinemas in the suburbs at a reduced rate), but had much to do with flaunting their status as independent wage-earners. As Gilbert Fisher, a teenage wage-earner in the 1930s, put it:

> If we got money and we could just go to' pictures, ooh it was thrilling that, it was great to go t'pictures. Ooh, you were well off, you were like a king; moreso if you went upstairs... you was somebody - 'I've been upstairs in' New Vic', you were proud of that. Other people couldn't afford it. 99

Such evidence invariably gets overlooked by cinema historians and historians of popular culture who have written about cinema and its 'function' in the inter-war period. Jeffrey Richards, for instance, argues that cinemas were ultimately institutions which allowed those with power in society the opportunity to make the powerless cinemagoing public accept

98.Harley, op.cit., p.112.
99.M.S.O.H.A., Tape 996.

the established ordering of society.[100] John MacKenzie argues a similar thing.[101] Both of these writers subscribe to the view that the cinema was a potent social control mechanism which contributed to the growth of a deferential and patriotic working-class in the '20s and '30s.[102]

The evidence presented above suggests that local cinemas were by no means simply institutions where a passive working-class audience would sit in silence and receive, unquestioningly, all the images and messages that were peddled in the films they went to see. Young wage-earners certainly did not believe all they were told in films. When A.E.H.Fielder asked the 'adolescents' in his sample what they had learnt about nature, life in other lands, life in the higher ranks of society, life in the underworld and the 'ways of living of ordinary men and women' in the films they saw at the

100. Richards, op.cit., pp.323-4. 'There can be little doubt that... the cinema in the 1930s played an important part in the maintenance of the hegemony of the ruling class. The film industry was run by men who desired to be seen as part of the Establishment... The actual films were used either to distract or to direct the audience's views into approved channels, by validating key institutions of hegemony, such as monarchy and Empire, the police and the law, and the armed forces, and promoting those qualities useful to society as presently constituted: hard work, monogamy, cheerfulness, deference, patriotism' (p.323).

101. See J.M.MacKenzie, Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960, Manchester 1984, Chapter 3. MacKenzie argues that an ideology of imperialism, militarism and monarchism was presented to the public through the medium of the cinema in the 1920s and 1930s and, further, that this ideology was internalised by the cinemagoing public.

102. id., p.91; Richards, op.cit., pp.323-4.

cinema, he was told: 'We don't go to the pictures to learn'.[103]

Young wage-earners who did go to the cinema specifically to see the film preferred Detective and Crook films to any others, according to Fielder. These films were as popular with teenage girls as they were with teenage boys. Adventure films and Comedies were also popular with this age-group, but Educational films and War films were despised. Only 5 boy apprentices in Fielder's study, for instance, out of 142 interviewed said that they liked War films; and, of the 120 Secondary School boys in the sample, only 3 said they liked War films.[104] Fielder, like his contemporaries, was worried that Crime films gave boys ideas about how to commit certain crimes. He therefore asked a loaded question about what his sanple had 'gained from films about life in the underworld'. The answers he received surprised him. Very few boys, or girls, were at all attracted by the underworld - 'the majority look upon it as horrible and dangerous', he commented.[105] He was forced to conclude, therefore, that films:

103. Fielder, op.cit., p.2.
104. id., p.13.
105. id., pp.29-30.

> do not consciously have a bad moral effect on adolescents... often the adolescents recognise films as poor stuff; they are distinctly critical of what they see. They claim to be unaffected because they feel that the life depicted on films is unreal... 106

This judgement seems far closer to the truth than the judgements of most other investigators who wrote about the cinema's influence on young people in the 1920s and 1930s.

106. *id.*, pp.35-36.

CHAPTER 6: '[L]ADS CAN GET RECREATION ELSEWHERE NOWADAYS': YOUTH MOVEMENTS AND THE YOUNG WAGE-EARNER.

The inter-war years were difficult ones for the numerous youth organisations in Manchester which offered teenage boys and girls 'rational recreation' under responsible adult supervision as an antidote to the lurid commercial dance halls, the cinemas and the streets. In 1917, just short of one half (42%) of all the boys in the 14-18 age-group in the city belonged to a youth organisation of some sort and around a third of all the girls in this age-group were members of at least one organisation.[1] But when a survey of all the organisations that catered for the teenage age-group in the city was undertaken in 1940, the investigators who undertook this survey (a group of voluntary workers working under the aegis of Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service), reached the following depressing conclusion:

> We cannot speak of home life and of all the unorganised interests of youth, but we now know that over 70 per cent, nearly three-quarters, of the youth of the city are untouched by church, party,...voluntary organisation, club or night school. 2

1.See Table 11(a) and Table 11(b), Appendix.
2.C.F.Carter, 'Youth Work in Manchester, The Report of the Youth Survey', S.W., Volume IV, No.6, October 1940, p.108.

in a follow-up survey undertaken by the same investigators a year later (in 1941) it was argued that the above figure was 'too generous' and that, in actual fact, 'not more than 10 per cent of adolescents between fourteen and twenty' were members of a youth organisation in Manchester in 1941-2. 'In spite of all the work of the past two years', the authors of this survey concluded (after numerous 'personal visits' to local churches, schools and youth clubs throughout 1941 and 1942):

> there is still a very large number of boys and girls who get no leisure-time supervision or education other than that provided by the home or the street. 3

One reason why youth movement membership locally was falling in the early years of the war was, of course, because of wartime conditions; girls' organisations, for instance, were said to be suffering because 'many parents' were not allowing their daughters to be out after dark.[4] Nevertheless, the authors of the second Youth Survey were forced to admit that youth movement membership locally had been progressively declining for some years before the outbreak of the war.[5]

3. Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service, Report of the Second Youth Survey, Manchester 1942, pp.6,16.
4. id., p.7.
5. id., p.15.

In other words, the recruitment problems encountered by numerous youth organisations locally during the war were not short-term but long-term.

This chapter will therefore focus on some of the problems which local youth leaders had to deal with in the 1920s and 1930s. There were two major ones. The first, a new problem in the 1920s and 1930s, was the progressive decline in the membership of many youth organisations that were active locally. An equally serious and more widespread problem was the significant increase in the number of casual or uncommitted members of a club or youth movement. Local youth leaders had begun to tackle these problems long before they were belatedly discovered by independent social investigators in the early 1940s.

The way they went about tackling these problems, however, varied a great deal. Some made definite concessions in order to keep their teenage members under the wholesome influence of the club; others introduced stricter rules governing membership in an attempt to stamp out the problem of the casual member. This chapter will examine how the officials of four youth organisations active locally dealt with the problems they faced: the officials at Lads' and Girls' Clubs; local Boy Scout leaders; the officials of the Manchester Battalion of the Jewish Lads' Brigade and the

officials at the Pioneer Club for Girl Clerks and Typists.

The first exhaustive survey of all the organisations that catered for the 14-18 age-group in Manchester was undertaken by Manchester Juvenile Organisations Committee (M.J.O.C.), at the request of the Home Office, in 1917. The subsequent Handbook which this Committee produced, in 1918, contained a list of all the organisations that catered for the 14-18 age-group in the city, and the number of 14-18 year olds in each organisation. The list shows quite clearly that youth organisations appealed to large numbers of 14-18 year olds in the city in 1917. Just short of 9,000 14-18 year old boys belonged to at least one youth organisation as did over 6,000 14-18 year old girls. Four out of every ten boys in the 14-18 age-group, in fact, and three out of every ten girls in this age-group belonged to a youth organisation of some sort in Manchester in 1917.[6]

The statistics cited above probably underestimate the number of 14-18 year olds locally who would have belonged to a youth organisation had the 1917 enquiry been undertaken under peace time conditions. Many 14-18 year olds who were working long hours in munitions factories in 1917, for instance, simply could not find the time to attend a youth

6.See Tables 11(a) and 11(b), Appendix.

organisation in the evenings:

> the long hours worked in munition and other factories, have depleted the senior membership of boys' organisations to such an extent that many of the branches are at present in abeyance,

M.J.O.C. pointed out in their Handbook.[7] The fact that nearly 15,000 14-18 year olds in the city were members of a youth organisation of some sort in 1917, therefore, seems all the more impressive in view of the recruitment problems certain organisations encountered during the war.

Of the youth organisations locally that lost members during the First World War, Lads' Clubs lost more senior boys to the munitions factories than any other organisation. Nevertheless, they still had far more 14-18 year old members than any other youth organisation in the city in 1917.[8] Twice as many 14-18 year old boys were members of a Lads' Club than were members of the Boy Scouts and three times as many 14-18 year old boys were members of a Lads' Club than were members of the Cadets and the Catholic Boys' Brigade. Nearly 3,000 14-18 year old boys (roughly one-seventh of all

7.M.J.O.C., Handbook, Manchester 1918, p.7.
8.Table 11(a), Appendix.

the boys in this age-group in the whole city) were members of a Lads' Club in Manchester in 1917; only 1,600 boys of the same age were members of the second most popular boys' organisation, the Boy Scouts. It seems worthwhile, therefore, to examine, first, the changing fortunes of the Lads' Club movement in the inter-war period and then to examine the fortunes of the local Boy Scout movement in the same period.

Of the numerous Lads' Clubs that were catering for teenage working boys in Manchester at the start of our period, The Hugh Oldham Lads' Club in Ancoats was one of the most popular in terms of membership. According to the official historian of the club, W.A.Richardson, the club had over a thousand members in 1919.[9] As his account makes clear, however, this club's membership began to decline rapidly in the inter-war period due, in large part, to the growth of more attractive alternatives to the club such as private camping, cycling and youth hostelling, all of which allowed boys (and girls) to organise their own leisure well away from interfering adults.[10] The emergence of new leisure pursuits for teenage workers did not necessarily mean, of course, that boys gave up being

9. W.A.Richardson, 'The Hugh Oldham Lads' Club 1888-1958', M.R., Autumn 1959, pp.339-351(341).
10. ibid.

members of clubs entirely. It did mean, however, that more boys were prepared to be merely 'casual' members of a club.

This was the main problem the officials at the Hugh Oldham Lads' Club had to deal with in the inter-war period. They were extremely concerned, for instance, about the serious decline in the number of boys who were prepared to attend the club event of the year, the annual Whit Week Camp. This was open to any club member who was aged 13 or over by the inter-war period; but the numbers in camp declined rapidly after 1921. In the club's annual report for 1922, it was reported that:

> A number of circumstances - the cost (nowadays considerable), unemployment, and, we fear, disinclination to make any effort to save their money - resulted in a much smaller number of lads... being able to go to camp at Whit. 11

In 1938, less than a hundred boys attended the club's annual camp which was the lowest figure in the club's fifty year history. Before the First World War, around 250 boys every year attended the club's Whit-Week Camp and 500 did in 1914.[12]

11. Hugh Oldham Lads' Club (H.O.L.C.), Annual Report 1922, p.4. The annual reports of this club are in M.C.R.L., Local History Library. The manuscript records of the club are in M.C.R.L., Archives Department (M7).
12. Richardson, op.cit., p.342. Just short of 500 boys (477) attended the club's 25th annual camp the previous year, in 1913, and 150 boys attended the club's first annual camp in 1889. See H.O.L.C., Annual Report 1913, p.3.

The Hugh Oldham Lads' Club was not the only Lads' Club in the city that ran into difficulties in this period. The Heyrod Street Men's and Lads' Club, which was also in Ancoats, experienced similar problems:

> In common with all similar institutions, we find ourselves face to face with such problems as unemployment, increased facilities for sensational amusement, and the deplorable strengthening of the money interest in sport,

remarked one official at the club in the club's annual report for 1927.[13] Although the officials at this club and those at other Lads' Clubs in the city were obviously not prepared to say how much their membership had declined since the war, their annual reports do clearly indicate that there was a general malaise in Lads' Club work in the city by the late 1920s. The officials at the Heyrod Street club, for instance, openly admitted that their club had less of an appeal to boys in 1929, owing to the growth of commercial pastimes such as cinemagoing and dance halls, than was the case before the First World War. It was pointed out in the club's annual report for 1929 that:

13. Heyrod Street Men's and Lads' Club, Ancoats (H.S.M.L.C.), Annual Report 1927, p.4. This club's annual reports and those of the Lads' Clubs referred to below are in M.C.R.L., Local History Library.

> the great increase in amusements of all kinds tends to make the appeal of a club such as this less attractive than of old - lads can get recreation elsewhere nowadays. 14

The officials at Ancoats Lads' Club shared this view. One official wrote in the club's annual report for 1930:

> Lads' Clubs now-a-days must be up-to-date if they are in any way to be a counter attraction to the growing and not too elevating influence of the cinema. 15

As we shall see, the officials at this club proved more willing to adapt to the changing leisure habits of young wage-earners than other Lads' Club leaders in the city. Nevertheless, even the officials at this club were forced to acknowledge that most of their members were only casually attached to the club by the late '30s. As one official at the club put it in 1938:

> A lad who can afford to go to the pictures twice a week; go to the seaside for his holidays, and get out on his bicycle at weekends has a very much wider outlook on life than was previously possible, and there is no doubt that self-reliance and initiative have been greatly fostered... 16

14. id., Annual Report 1929, p.4.
15. Ancoats Lads' Club (A.L.C.), Annual Report 1930, p.16.
16. id., Annual Report 1938, p.6.

This official was in no doubt that the Lads' Club movement locally was experiencing unprecedented difficulties by the late '30s, owing to:

> the greater independence of the modern Lads' Club member.

For one thing:

> their (his members') bi-weekly sojourn at the local cinema house means two nights less at the Club, and their hiking and biking activities are liable to lead to a disinclination to attend our Annual Camp and Sunday Services,

he pointed out.[17] How, therefore, did officials adapt their organisations to the changing leisure habits and more 'casual' attitude of members in the 1920s and 1930s ?

The officials at each of the three institutions mentioned above - the Hugh Oldham Lads' Club, the Heyrod Street Men's and Lads' Club and the Ancoats Lads' Club - all modified their programmes in some way in the 1920s and 1930s, in order to avoid the prospect of wage-earning members deserting club life for other activities. The officials at the Hugh Oldham Lads' Club began showing silent films on the club's premises in 1936 and boys who attended the club were

17. id., p.7.

allowed to smoke in the club after March 1939.[18] The officials at the other two clubs made far more radical changes.

At Heyrod Street, the Boys' Brigade company that Charles Russell had set up before the First World War and which still formed 'the backbone' of the club's work in 1927, according to the club's officials, was scrapped a year later in 1928.

> We have become convinced that its methods had ceased to appeal to the lads of this district for which... our Club primarily exists,

the author of the club's annual report for 1928 was forced to admit.[19] Russell, who died in 1917, would have been deeply shocked by this decision. He saw the Brigade as an invaluable mechanism both for instilling discipline into the working-class boys of the Ancoats district and for 'building up their characters' and he insisted that any boy who joined the club before the First World War should be an active member of the Brigade. (This meant he had to attend drill once a week and Bible class every Sunday).[20] The decision to abolish the Boys' Brigade company at the club in 1928 was, therefore, a radical

18. H.O.L.C., Minute Book, 5 March 1928-5 October 1942. See entries under 31 August 1936 and 6 March 1939. M.C.R.L., Archives Department (M7/1/7).
19. H.S.M.L.C., Annual Report 1927, pp.5-6; id., Annual Report 1928, p.6.
20. F.P.Gibbon, A History of the Heyrod Street Lads' Club And of The Fifth Manchester Company of The Boys' Brigade, 1889-1910, Manchester 1911, pp.11,14. Members of the club were still obliged to attend the Bible class every Sunday and drill once a week as late as 1927. See, for instance, H.S.M.L.C., Annual Report 1927, p.5.

departure from the policy pursued by Russell at the club before the First World War. After 1928, the officials at the club effectively abandoned their attempts to 'build up the characters' of working boys (which Russell regarded as the ultimate end of Lads' Club work) and decided instead to make the activities which interested their members - Billiards, Table Tennis and Draughts - the centre of club life. The officials at the club also began showing films on the club's premises in 1929.[21]

Ancoats Lads' Club was far more successful than either the Hugh Oldham Lads' Club or Heyrod Street Lads' Club in keeping boys who were full-time wage-earners interested in club life. What little evidence there is suggests that the latter two clubs began to attract fewer young wage-earners and more schoolboys in the 1920s and 1930s. But Ancoats Lads' Club continued to appeal to large numbers of boys who were full-time wage-earners. In 1928, for instance, the club had over 1,700 members (1,710), 50% of whom were 'working lads' of 14 or older.[22]

21. id., Annual Report 1928, p.9; id., Annual Report 1929, pp.4-5, 10. It was admitted in the club's annual report for 1929 that, although the members were encouraged to attend church every Sunday, few did: 'Unfortunately the general decline in the habit of church-going has spread to our lads, and the attendance on Sunday evenings [at the Russell Chapel which was attached to the club] is not nearly so large as we should desire' (p.5).
22. On the prominence of schoolboys at Heyrod Street Lads' Club, see H.S.M.L.C. Annual Report 1928, p.5; at the Hugh Oldham Lads' Club see Richardson, op.cit., p.345. See also A.L.C., Annual Report 1924-5, p.14; id., Annual Report 1926, pp.6-7; id., Annual Report 1927, p.9; id., Annual Report 1928, p.5.

The officials at Ancoats Lads' Club were far more responsive to the demands of their older members than the officials at the other two clubs. They allowed their senior members (i.e.boys over 14) to hold dances regularly after 1925, for instance, which the officials were well aware was an extremely progressive move:

> The Officers are well aware that... the Club may gain an exaggerated reputation of frivolity but, after all, dancing is... more or less... a necessity with modern youth...

it was stated in the club's annual report for 1927.[23] The most senior boys at the club (boys aged 19 or over) were put in charge at these dances and, interestingly, the club's officials were hardly ever present.[24]

In fact, the officials at Ancoats Lads' Club remained very much in the background of club life, but this was part of a deliberate policy rather than a sign of their lack of control. By delegating responsibility to senior boys and by allowing their senior members to organise their own activities (i.e.by governing informally), the club's officials believed

23. id., Annual Report 1927, p.8.
24. ibid; id., Annual Report 1926, pp.6-7; id., Annual Report 1929, p.9.

that they would attract boys who:

> will not face the more regular discipline of organisations such as the Boy Scouts and the Boys' Brigades. 25

One official pointed out in 1929:

> while we must have good discipline, as far as possible that discipline must be kept in the background and our members made to feel that, as its name implies, it is their Club. 26

This policy, it appears, was remarkably successful in keeping 14-19 year old boys interested in club life during the 1920s, but senior members began to drift away from the club in the 1930s. Few senior boys attended the club's annual camp in 1930, but many went on trips to 'the much-advertised pleasure resorts'.[27] The club's officials introduced new activities in the 1930s in an attempt to keep their older members away from the cinemas: a wireless set was installed at the club in 1930, a Dance Class was started in 1936 and Roller-Skating was introduced in 1938. But these activities did not prevent senior boys from drifting away from the club both to see 'talkies' regularly at the local cinemas and to pursue other new-fangled

25. id., p.4.
26. ibid.
27. id., Annual Report 1930, p.14.

activities such as cycling and hiking.[28] Ironically, the activities which kept senior boys interested in club life in the 1930s were not new innovations such as Roller-Skating, but activities which had featured prominently at the club since before the First World War, such as football and cricket. The Ancoats Lads' Club had seven football teams in the mid-1930s and ,whenever these performed well, other areas of club life also prospered. 'It may seem a strange thing', reported one club official in 1934,

> but our Sunday Evening Services are better attended when our football teams are doing well... A greater loyalty pervades the Club and teams come along en masse throughout the season. 29

The club was still in a precarious position by the late 1930s, however, because the club's football teams were not successful in these years and the rank and file club member, it was acknowledged, was now only very casually attached to the club.[30]

What conclusions are to be drawn from this account of Lads' Club work in Manchester during the 1920s and 1930s ?

28. id., p.16; id., Annual Report 1936, p.11; id., Annual Report 1938, pp.6-7, 9-10.
29. id., Annual Report 1934, p.6; id., Annual Report 1935, p.8; id., Annual Report 1936, p.10.
30. id., Annual Report 1938, pp.6-7.

Three things stand out in the records of these institutions. Firstly, the experiences of officials at three of the most popular Lads' Clubs in the city were strikingly similar: all experienced severe difficulties in trying to keep older boys interested in club life. The difficulties experienced by the officials at a fourth Lads' Club, Ardwick Lads' Club, were identical, judging by the following statement which was made in the club's annual report for 1925:

> It is recognised that the years 16 to 19 are very critical years in the life of a boy, and there are so many outside attractions, not always very healthy, that unless the club provides successful counter attractions, members are apt to drift elsewhere. It is in the providing of successful counter attractions that the difficulty lies. 31.

The second point which emerges from a review of Lads' Club work in Manchester in the 1920s and 1930s is that the leaders were forced to make quite drastic changes at their clubs in order to avoid the prospect of older teenage members drifting away from the clubs altogether. At Heyrod Street Men's and Lads' Club, drill - the core activity at the club before the First World War - was abolished from the curriculum altogether in 1928 and a year later the club's

31. Ardwick Lads' and Men's Club, Annual Report 1924-5, p.8.

officials began showing silent films at the club. At Ancoats Lads' Club, the officials were far more innovative: they allowed their older members to organise dances regularly at the club after 1925; they installed a wireless at the club in 1930 and they introduced Roller-Skating to the club's activities in 1938. At Ardwick Lads' Club, the weekly entrance fee of 1d for boys who were 14 or older and ½d for boys who were under 14 was abolished in 1935 in a deliberate attempt to lure boys back to this club.[32]

The third and final conclusion to be drawn from a review of the evidence is that local Lads' Club leaders in this period had no clearly defined aims compared with their predecessors or, if they did, these were lost sight of in the struggle to think up new innovations which would prevent boys from drifting away from the club. Before the First World War, both the officials at Hugh Oldham Lads' Club and those at Heyrod Street wanted to 'build up the character of working boys' and saw regular drill and other 'manly' pursuits such as boxing as ways of achieving this.[33] Hardly

32. id., Annual Report 1935-6, p.5.
33. See, for instance, Hugh Oldham Lads' Club, Annual Report 1891, in which it is stated that: 'The object of this Club is to secure, so far as possible, an upright mind in an upright body for the lads who are members' (p.5). Fifteen years later, character-building was still seen as the most important task of the officials at this club: 'A feature of Lads' Clubs, may-be the most important feature... is the formation of character through their agency', it was pointed out in the club's Annual Report for 1906 (p.3). The most effective way of 'building up the characters' of working boys, the officials at the club found, was through encouraging them to participate in 'fresh air' and 'manly sports'. See, for instance, H.O.L.C., Annual Report 1898, p.6. On the importance of character-building at the Heyrod Street Lads' Club before the war, see F.P. Gibbon, op.cit., pp.5,11. Interestingly, the officials at Ancoats Lads' Club were not interested in 'building up the characters' of working boys even before the war. See, for instance, A.L.C., Annual Report 1902-3 and id., Annual Report, 1904-5.

any mention is made of character-building in the annual reports of local Lads' Clubs during the 1920s and 1930s, however, and it is clear from the experience of Heyrod Street Lads' Club officials that an activity like drill was no longer as popular among older boys in the 1920s as it was before the First World War. Local Lads' Club leaders were forced to introduce new activities in the 1920s and 1930s, therefore, in order to keep teenage boys interested in club life. Some of these activities were passive not 'manly' pursuits (film shows and wireless listening are the most obvious examples) and such pursuits were a complete departure from the ideas and methods of earlier Lads' Club leaders active locally.

The main problem local Lads' Club leaders had to tackle in the 1920s and 1930s was, then, the growth of a casual and uncommitted membership. The main problem local Boy Scout leaders had to deal with was the sharp contraction of their movement. Manchester and District Boy Scouts Association (M.& D.B.S.A.) lost members at a dramatic rate in the 1920s and 1930s. But its leaders proved far less willing to adapt to changes in the leisure habits of the teenage age-group than Lads' Club leaders and, consequently, only a tiny minority of local Scouts joined the Rover Section of the movement on reaching 17 or 18.

The Boy Scout Movement of Manchester contracted markedly during this period as the M.& D.B.S.A.'s own membership statistics show. In 1921, there were 4,310 Boy Scouts in Manchester,

but the number of Boy Scouts locally had fallen to 3,796 by 1924 and to 3,657 two years later in 1926.[34] Although there was a slight recovery in the late 1920s, a steep decline set in during the 1930s. In 1930 there were just under 4,000 Boy Scouts in Manchester (3,989), but six years later the membership had been cut by almost a thousand to 3,151 and it remained at around 3,000 for the remainder of the decade. In 1938, the last year a Scout census was undertaken before the war, there were 3,164 Boy Scouts in Manchester. In effect, then, between the first Scout census in 1921 and the last inter-war Scout census in 1938, the local Boy Scout movement had lost a quarter of its members.

Few Boy Scouts remained in the movement beyond the age of 17 when they became eligible to join the Rovers. The number of Rovers in every single inter-war year was infinitesimal compared with the number of Boy Scouts.[35] Rover membership in Manchester reached an inter-war peak of 716 in 1930, but there were nearly 4,000 Boy Scouts in the city that year and throughout the 1920s there were never fewer than 3,000 Boy Scouts in any one year. So it seems abundantly clear

34. See Table 12, Appendix for the statistics cited in the following paragraph.
35. ibid.

from the available statistical evidence that few Boy Scouts crossed over into the senior section of the movement.

Other evidence, too, suggests that the Rover troops of Manchester experienced severe recruitment problems during this period. Rover work in different parts of the city was not discussed in any detail at the meetings of the Rover Sub-Committee of Manchester and District during the 1920s, but, from the early 1930s onwards, local Rover leaders were asked to summarise their work at these meetings. Their comments, which were recorded in the Minutes of the Rover Sub-Committee's meetings, indicate that Rover troops in every district of the city were losing members by the mid-1930s. The Minutes of a meeting held on 3 March 1936, for instance, contained the following brief summary:

> Openshaw. Numbers down.
>
> North Central. Things slow.
>
> Gorton. Down on Census. 2 Crews closed.
>
> South East. A few good Crews, several bad. Poor Divisional meetings.... 36

Another meeting was held later in the year, on 1 September 1936, and the predicament of local troops had not improved

36. Manchester Rover Scouts, Minute Book, 1935-58. This Minute Book, along with other manuscript and printed material on the local Boy Scout and Rover Movements, is in the possession of the G.M.R.O. in Manchester.

at all over the preceding six months; the following comments were recorded in the Minutes of the meeting:

> Openshaw. Numbers not up.
>
> North Central. Quiet summer. No Scouts coming up...
>
> Farnworth. Slack in summer, but hiking and camping.
>
> Bolton. Regular few at monthly meetings.
>
> East Central... No Scouts coming up...
>
> Chorlton. As usual... 37

Rover membership in Manchester declined markedly after 1936. There were 707 Rovers throughout the entire city in that year but less than 600 (587) the following year and only slightly over 600 (611) in 1938.[38]

To summarise the evidence presented so far, therefore, it seems that the local Boy Scout movement began to lose members at a fairly steady rate throughout the 1920s but at a much quicker rate after 1930. Rover membership in Manchester also began to decline markedly after 1930, although the 1920s appear to have been far better years for the Rover movement of Manchester (in terms of recruitment) than for the Boy Scouts.

37. ibid.
38. Table 12, Appendix.

It seems that the contraction of the local Boy Scout movement during this period was not an isolated case. The Boy Scout movement in Liverpool, for instance, was also losing boys at a serious rate by the end of the 1920s according to two Liverpool youth workers, Ernest S.Griffith and R.A.Joseph, who wrote in 1928:

> The leakage from the clubs and Scouts is serious, the more so as the figures greatly understate the membership turnover. Boys drift aimlessly from club to club. Most leave altogether during the summer. When one of the large Liverpool clubs claims a permanent membership of only 100 on an annual turnover of 800, the gravity of the problem can be realised. 39

Griffith and Joseph ran a Boys' Club at the University Settlement in Liverpool and they found that the only things which kept boys of 14-16 interested in their club were, firstly, 'the jobs scheme' organised by the club's officials and, secondly, the fact that boys who mixed together outside the club were allowed to stick together inside the club (they christened this the 'gang club' idea). Interestingly, however, neither of these experiments solved the problem of boys drifting away from the club; they merely reduced the turnover at the club.[40]

39.Griffith and Joseph, op.cit., pp.118-119.
40.id., p.119.

Though Boys' Club leaders in Liverpool and Manchester kept some boys over the age of 14 interested in club life, the Boy Scout movement in Liverpool, according to Griffith and Joseph, had a far worse record with older teenage working boys for two reasons. Firstly, the average Boy Scout troop was dominated by schoolboys under the age of 14; the prevailing belief amongst young wage-earners, therefore, was that the movement was 'for kids'. Secondly, working boys of 14 and over were unlikely to remain in a movement which demanded that they wear a uniform and short trousers not least because they would be ridiculed by their workmates.[41]

Unfortunately, Griffith and Joseph produced no concrete evidence to support their thesis that the most serious leakage from the Boy Scout movement in Liverpool occurred when boys reached the age of 14 and began wage-earning. Their arguments were simply based on their own 'experience' of boys in the South-end of Liverpool, a slum district. It would be interesting to see whether their thesis held true for the Boy Scout movement in Manchester; but, owing to the absence of statistical data on the specific age-groups who joined the local Boy Scout movement, this is

41. ibid. It was claimed by these two youth workers that the Scout uniform 'to the average slum boy makes him an object of ridicule at his most self-conscious age'. They advocated that '[a] Scout troop which is exclusively over the age of 14 and does not require a uniform might be worth trying'.

not possible. It is worth pointing out, though, that two academics in Manchester who studied the leisure activities of 'working-class adolescents' in Hulme, in 1939, used similar arguments to Griffith and Joseph in explaining the poor record of Scout and Guides and other clubs with working boys and working girls.[42] They wrote that:

> The clubs available in Hulme are one-sex organisations. Consequently, the effectiveness of the club is seriously limited so far as older adolescents are concerned.... the clubs tend to cater for the like-sex stage of adolescence and for those whose development has been retarded or arrested... existing clubs touch too small a proportion of the population, occupy too small a percentage of leisure time and fill that percentage with too trivial activities, for their practical effect upon adolescence to be important. 43

They went on to argue that the clubs of Hulme would only begin to attract large numbers of working boys and girls if they were allowed to mix in the same club. Some local Lads' Club leaders had made definite steps in this direction by 1939, as was seen earlier. But the local Boy Scout leadership remained stubbornly opposed to the idea of mixed-sex activities. As a result, those who tended to remain in the local Scout

42. James and Moore, op.cit., pp.144-145. For further details about this investigation see above p.222ff 28.
43. ibid.

movement longest were boys who attended single-sex grammar schools such as Manchester Grammar School rather than working-class boys who left school at 14. The latter, however, definitely joined the local Boy Scouts during their schooldays, as will be seen below.

There is some evidence to suggest, then, that boys - and particularly working-class boys -drifted away from the Boy Scout movement as soon as their status changed from that of schoolboy to wage-earner at about the age of 14. But neither local Scout leaders nor local Rover leaders attempted to adapt their movements in order to attract more working boys as local Lads' Club leaders did. In fact, the local Scout leadership in their literature hardly even mentioned the fact that older teenage boys were drifting away from the movement in these years. The tone of their annual reports in the 1920s and 1930s was smug and self-congratulatory. Much was said about the qualities required to join the local Boy Scouts; a boy must, for instance:

> satisfy his Scoutmaster that he knows the Scout-law, signs and salute; the composition of the Union Jack and the right way to fly it; uses of the Scout Staff...; and the following knots: Reef, sheet bend, clove hitch, bowline, fisherman's, sheepshank, and understand their special uses,

it was pointed out in the M. & D.B.S.A.'s Year Book for

1924.[44] Similarly, much was said about the qualities required to join the Rovers; a boy had to be 17 or over, it was reported in the Year Book for 1926 ,and:

> He must satisfy his Scoutmaster that he knows:- The Scout Law; Signs and Salutes; Six Knots...; First Aid; How to lay and light a fire and cook a simple meal; The use of the compass and how to make a map.

In addition, he must know:

> the right way to fly the Union Jack and what it stands for, and the underlying principles of the constitution of the British Commonwealth. 45

Next to nothing was said, however, either about the falling membership or about the need to devise new activities to broaden the appeal of the movement.

In fact, far from wanting to broaden the appeal of their movements, local Scout and Rover leaders seemed quite prepared to accept the fact that their movements only appealed to a tiny minority of working boys by the 1930s. The local Rover leadership even introduced stricter rules governing

44.M. & D.B.S.A., Year Book 1924, p.17.
45.id., Year Book 1926, p.23.

entry into their movement in the late '30s. Boys who wished to join a local Rover troop in 1938 were no longer automatically admitted to a Troop at the age of 17, as was the case in the 1920s. Those who were 'not sufficiently well developed physically and mentally' had to wait until they reached 18.[46] In addition, boys who wished to join a local Rover Troop in 1938 had to satisfy a Rover Scout leader that they had read and studied both Scouting For Boys and Rovering To Success (both, of course, written by Chief Scout Lord Baden-Powell); they had to be familiar with the Scout Promise and the Scout Law, and they also had to be:

> sufficiently knowledgeable to train a boy of Scout age in the tenderfoot tests. 47

Furthermore, any boy who wished to be either a Scout or a Rover in 1938 was forbidden from joining a political organisation and from attending political meetings. It is unlikely, therefore, that any of the 13,000 engineering apprentices who participated in the apprentices' strike in 1937 were either Boy Scouts or Rovers.[48]

46. id., Year Book 1938, p.4.
47. ibid.
48. ibid. See above, pp. 136-145 for an analysis of the Manchester and Salford engineering apprentices' strike of 1937.

Given that membership of the local Boy Scouts during this period required both schoolboyish knowledge about the Monarchy, the Commonwealth and other topics, and given that the discipline was strict, it is worth considering whether the movement ever appealed to working-class boys from ordinary working-class families as well as to boys from upper-working-class and lower-middle-class families. Did the movement ever appeal to a broad spectrum of boys, in other words, or was the movement always dependent on the support of boys from upwardly mobile working-class families and lower-middle-class families, as John Springhall has suggested ?[49]

There is strong evidence to suggest that the local Boy Scout movement did attract boys from ordinary working-class families during this period despite the fact that membership of this movement was more costly both in the short and long-term than membership of a Lads' Club (the uniform alone, for instance, cost around 15/- in the early 1920s). One indication that the movement did appeal to ordinary working-class boys is that Boy Scout Troops were set up in the poorest districts of the city. In fact, such districts were invariably saturated with youth organisations of all kinds. Hulme provides perhaps

49. See, for instance, J.Springhall, Youth, op.cit., p.126. Springhall concludes that the Boy Scouts and other youth movements 'were a form of recreation enjoyed by the upper-working-class and the lower-middle-class taking place largely under the supervision of the middle-class... (ibid.).

the best example of an unambiguously working-class district of the city during this period. James and Moore described the district as straightforwardly and unemotively as they could for their study of 'adolescent leisure' in the district in 1939. They wrote:

> Hulme is... a square mile in area. It has 56,790 inhabitants and 14,200 houses Apart from small shopkeepers it consists entirely of working-class people, a considerable proportion of whom are unemployed. The workers are of the unskilled and semi-skilled kind, doing work that is predominantly manual... The skilled and better paid artisan tends to leave for better districts... For both men and women there is little prospect of fundamental change in the conditions that they have known all their lives. Not that any radical change, either personal or social, is really contemplated or desired. What seems to be desired is security, confirmation of the existing way of life, with, if possible, little improvements within the ambit of that way of life, such as a little more money, and a little more leisure. 50

Hulme, then, was an overcrowded district which was populated by ordinary working-class families who had little, if any, desire to improve their social standing and who, it seems, merely wanted to avoid insecurity such as that caused by the main breadwinner losing his or her job.

50.James and Moore, op.cit., pp.133-4.

Hulme was saturated with youth organisations of all kinds, including Boy Scout Troops, in 1917. Within a radius of one square mile, there were seven Boy Scout Troops, six Boys' Brigade Companies, a Boys' Life Brigade branch, four Church Lads' Brigade branches, two Lads' Clubs, a Girls' Club, four Girls' Friendly Society branches, six Girl Guide branches, a Girls' Life Brigade branch and a Wesleyan Girls' Club.[51] Interestingly, some of these were no longer in existence when the second comprehensive survey of all the youth organisations operating in the city was undertaken in 1940. By this time, there were only two Boy Scout troops in Hulme, only two Church Lads' Brigade branches, only one Lads' Club and only one Girl Guide branch.[52]

The above evidence, therefore, suggests two things. Firstly, since the number of youth organisations in Hulme contracted markedly in the 1920s and 1930s, it seems reasonable to conclude that this was a lean period for the youth leaders of Hulme, both for the Boy Scout leaders in the district and for the leaders of other organisations such as Lads' Clubs, the Church Lads' Brigade and the Girl Guides. All of these organisations had fewer branches in the Hulme district by the close of the inter-war period, presumably because of low

51. M.J.O.C., op.cit., pp.68-9.
52. M.E.C., Youth Committee Report 1940-41, Manchester 1941, pp.33-4.

attendances. Secondly, the fact that there were more Boy Scout Troops in Hulme in 1917 than there were branches of any other youth organisation indicates that the movement definitely did appeal to boys from ordinary working-class families. Hulme was not peculiar in this respect; the Boy Scout movement also thrived in other working-class districts of the city. There were seven Boy Scout Troops in Ardwick, for instance, in 1917 and another seven in Gorton.[53] (Both of these districts were unambiguously working-class at the time). There were only six Boy Scout Troops, however, in Chorlton-cum-Hardy; a middle-class suburb to the south of the city.[54]

A comprehensive list of all the Boy Scout Troops in the city was included in the M. & D. B.S.A.'s Year Book for 1924. This shows quite clearly that the local movement thrived in working-class districts as well as in lower-middle-class districts. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. In Ancoats and Ardwick (both working-class districts), there were 13 Boy Scout Troops in 1924.[55] The University Settlement in Ancoats had its own Boy Scout Troop, as did the Ancoats Lads' Club. Most of the other Troops in this district

53.M.J.O.C., op.cit., pp.48,65.
54.id., p.52.
55.M. & D.B.S.A., Year Book 1924, p.38.

were attached to chapels or churches. In the Gorton district (another working-class district), there were seven Boy Scout Troops in 1924; the same number as in 1917. Two of these Troops were run by prominent local employers; one was for the boy employees of Crossley's engineering firm and the other was for the boy employees of the Beyer-Peacock engineering firm.[56] In Longsight, another working-class area, there were 18 Scout Troops in 1924 and in the Hulme and Moss Side districts there were six and five Troops respectively.[57]

The local Boy Scout movement also attracted middle-class boys, of course. Manchester Grammar School, for instance, had five Scout Troops in 1924 and Manchester Central High School for Boys also had its own Scout Troop.[58] Scout Troops were also set up in middle-class suburbs such as Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Didsbury, Fallowfield and Withington.[59] But it is quite clear from the evidence cited above that, in the 1920s and 1930s, the local Boy Scout movement appealed just as much to ordinary working-class boys as to lower-middle-class boys or grammar school boys. It is likely, though, that working-class boys who left school at 14 deserted the movement at a

56. id., p.39.
57. id., pp.40-1, 51-2.
58. id., pp.49-50.
59. id., pp.36-7, 53-4.

younger age than working-class and lower-middle-class boys who remained in full-time education beyond the age of 14 (certainly the Liverpool and Hulme evidence suggests this).[60]

The question still remains: why did the local Boy Scout membership contract so markedly in the 1920s and 1930s ? As we have already seen, local Boy Scout leaders did not dwell on this issue in their annual reports. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to be precise about why the movement was losing members in the 1920s and 1930s. The worst years for the local movement were from 1930 onwards.[61] These were also, coincidentally, years when talking pictures were beginning to be shown regularly at cinemas in the city. Boys of Scout age were among the most habitual cinemagoers and, as the last chapter showed, youth leaders from Baden-Powell down were the most vociferous critics of the cinema. So the emergence of the 'super cinema' may be one reason for the sharp contraction of Boy Scout membership locally in the 1930s.

Springhall has argued that the main reason for the movement's poor recruitment record from the early 1930s onwards was 'the proliferation of new leisure activities'; particularly hiking.[62] The Youth Hostel Association's member-

60.See above, pp. 312-315.
61.See Table 12 , Appendix.
62.Springhall, Youth, op.cit., pp.63-4.

ship grew at a dramatic rate in the 1930s; from 16,000 in 1931 to 83,417 in 1939.[63] It must be said, however, that the local branch of the Youth Hostel Association attracted very few boys of Scout age in the 1930s. Of the 4,607 members in 1936-7, only 154 were boys and of the 5,458 members a year later only 141 were boys.[64] The local movement was dominated by young professionals such as teachers.[65]

Neither did political youth movements like the Clarion Cyclists and the Young Communist League lure significant numbers of boys away from the Boy Scouts. The Manchester branch of the Clarion Cyclists had only 25 members in January 1936. A year later, the total membership (adults and youths) was still 'less than a hundred' and the teenage membership began to fall off in 1937 largely due to the fact that 'some members have started courting'.[66]

63. id., pp.63-4, 70ff82.
64. Y.H.A. (England and Wales), Manchester and District Regional Group, Annual Report 1936-7, p.8; id., Annual Report 1937-8, p.8.
65. See, for instance, id., Annual Report 1932-3, p.2; id., Annual Report 1933-4, p.2.
66. The Clarion Cyclist, December 1936; id., April 1937. M.C.R.L., Archives Department (016/Box 5).

The Young Communist League's main problem locally in the 1920s and 1930s was not how to keep teenage boys interested in the work of the organisation but how to persuade them to join it. The local branch only had around 70 members in the mid-1920s and not all of these were local youngsters. Some boys travelled to the meetings in the Socialist Hall, Openshaw, from as far afield as Wigan and Preston. Ten young miners from Wigan cycled 20 miles to attend a local branch meeting in July 1926. Only 70 'comrades' were present at this meeting but it was the best attended meeting ever according to the Chairman of the local branch of the Y.C.L.[67] Recruiting young workers into the local Y.C.L. was a painfully slow process. Between July 1926 and February 1927, local activists canvassed the whole of Salford and the whole of Pendleton. The sum total of their 'house-to-house' canvassing was eight new recruits from Salford and the possibility of three more from Pendleton.[68]

In short, then, the Boy Scout movement locally does not appear to have lost members to other youth movements either in the 1920s or in the 1930s. It no doubt lost most of its older members to 'the super cinemas'. But another

67. Y.W., 7 August 1926. British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.
68 W.Y.W., 12 February 1927. British Museum Newspaper Library, Colindale, London.

reason why the membership began to fall off at a dramatic rate in the 1930s was that membership of the Boy Scouts required too much effort. Boy Scout leaders who tried to set up a Boy Scout Troop in Wythenshawe in the 1930s encountered insuperable difficulties in trying to interest the boys of the estate in the movement and eventually were forced to abandon their attempts to set up a Troop in this district, declaring in a Handbook published in 1939:

> Our attempt to run an old farm-house at Wythenshawe, as a kind of communal club-room for groups on the Wythenshawe Estate has been defeated... by the physical difficulties of getting boys to come to a club-room which is not on their own doorstep. 69

Despite such failures, it would be wrong to conclude that the inter-war period was simply a period of difficulty for the local Boy Scout movement. Although this was true at a macro level(recruitment to the Boy Scouts and the Rovers falling off sharply after 1930), individual Troops did flourish even in the lean years of the 1930s. Those organised around Manchester Grammar School apparently enjoyed a halcyon period in the 1930s.One schoolmaster and Scout official at this institution gave a glowing account of his Scout Troop's

69.M.& D.B.S.A., Handbook for 1939, p.12.

activities in the 1930s in the official history of the Manchester Grammar School's involvement with Scouting, Scouting At The Manchester Grammar School 1912-1955, which was published in the 1950s:

> Saturday by Saturday Scouts came faithfully to the clubroom for six or seven hours of busy scouting activity. The parade was at 2.30. After the inspection and 'flag-up' there would be a scouting game... which might take the form of a convoy run, a prince game which was a form of escorting royalty through hostile country, a flag raid, a treasure hunt. As long as there was rivalry, a certain amount of friendly 'scrapping', and a fair measure of success it was considered a good game... Tea would follow in the clubroom. The evening would then be devoted to patrol work, badge work and tests, indoor games, mostly of the wilder sort - tilting, obstacle races, boxing - and a sing-song would generally bring the evening to a close. 70

Manchester Grammar School's Boy Scout Troops were specifically for boys who were pupils at that institution; in other words, for middle-class rather than working-class boys. From the limited evidence available, it does seem that Boy Scout and Rover Troops that were dependent on the support of middle-class boys did not experience the difficulties that Boy Scout leaders in working-class districts faced - most notably the

70.M.G.S., Scouting At The Manchester Grammar School, 1912-1955, Manchester 1955, p.16.

drift away from the organisations at about the age of 14 - to anything like the same extent.

The local Jewish Lads' Brigade's record during this period - both in terms of recruitment and also in terms of the movement's inability to interest boys for long once they had joined - almost exactly mirrored the ebbing fortunes of both the local Boy Scouts and the local Lads' Clubs. 'It is difficult in all Lads' Clubs today to secure a stability of membership', it was pointed out in the local J.L.B.'s annual report for 1935:

> Outside attractions, many of a doubtful character, are numerous, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to interest large numbers in an organisation of this kind. 71

The above statement is slightly misleading because the local J.L.B. had never attracted large numbers of Jewish boys (especially boys over the age of 14) at any time before 1935. When the first Manchester branch of the J.L.B. was set up in February 1899, at the Jews' School in Derby Street, Salford, the movement, initially attracted only 80 boys.[72] This figure had increased to 278 boys by May 1899, according

71. J.L.B., Annual Report 1935, p.67. The movement's annual reports were published in London, but reports from the regional branches of the J.L.B. were included at the end of each report. The annual reports are with the manuscript records of Manchester Jewish Lads' Brigade in M.C.R.L., Archives Department (M130).
72. Manchester J.L.B., 1st Annual Report 1899-1903, p.25.

to the officials who ran the local J.L.B.; but the membership did not increase significantly after this date. By 1917, only 300 local Jewish boys were members of the J.L.B. according to Manchester Juvenile Organisations Committee and, of these, 180 were under the age of 14; that is, still schoolchildren. Only 120 local Jewish boys between the ages of 14 and 18 were members of the local J.L.B., therefore, in 1917.[73] The local J.L.B.'s annual reports for the 1920s and 1930s do not, unfortunately, supply information on the ages of its members; but a large proportion were undoubtedly schoolboys under the age of 14. This conclusion is, of course, a speculative one; but there is some evidence to support it in the Minutes of the Officers' meetings.

The clearest indication that the local J.L.B. was heavily dependent on the support of Jewish schoolboys, certainly by the late 1920s, is that the officers who attended a meeting on 5 April 1927 complained that few of the members were planning to go on the annual camping trip that year:

> many having stated that they were going to the school camps in preference. 74

73. ibid; M.J.O.C., op.cit., p.8; Table 11(a), Appendix.
74. Manchester J.L.B., Officers Minutes, 4 September 1923 - 5 March 1934.

One reason, no doubt, why the J.L.B. was far less popular among older Jewish boys who were in employment and why the movement was so heavily dependent on schoolboys for support was the fact that all the local J.L.B. companies were organised around local schools.[75] The local J.L.B.'s Officers did not deliberately aim at excluding all but schoolboys from joining the movement. Their intention was rather to pitch the movement at working-class Jewish boys who were about to leave elementary school in the hope that they would be so hooked on Brigade life by the time they left school and entered employment at 14 that they would not want to leave the movement until they were forced to at 18. The real goal of the organisers, therefore, which was clearly stated in the J.L.B.'s annual report for 1919, was:

> to extend the working of the Jewish Lads' Brigade so that there may eventually be no Jewish lad of between 14 and 17 years of age who (if he is not already a member of some similar organisation) does not belong to [our] body. 76

But these lofty ambitions did not even come close to being achieved in the 1920s and 1930s, for a number of reasons.

75.See, for instance, M.J.O.C., op.cit., p.58.
76.J.L.B., Annual Report 1919, p.4.

Firstly, as has already been pointed out, the local J.L.B. was dominated by schoolboys which was bound to make the movement seem inappropriate to the teenage wage-earning boy who had 'money to spend' on more grown-up activities such as the cinema and the dance hall; unless, of course, he had become extremely attached to club life. Even the dedicated member, however, tended to leave the movement at about the age of 16. Martin B. is a case in point. He joined the local J.L.B. in the 1920s. He was a pupil at Salford Grammar School at the time and joined the movement because it had a 'proper gym' in which he could practice his favourite hobby, boxing. He attended the local J.L.B. a few nights a week in the 1920s, mostly to box, but also to play table tennis and draughts. He remained in the movement longer than most boys because he was in the boxing team.(His team won the Prince of Wales Boxing Shield while he was still a member of the local J.L.B., at the age of 15). Nevertheless, although a keen and successful member of the local J.L.B., he finally left the movement at the age of 16 when he began attending dance halls like Dyson's (a 'tenth rate place' in North Manchester) and the Ritz regularly in order to meet English girls. He and his friends would also visit billiard halls regularly at about the age of 16 or 17, although they boycotted clubs like the Maccabi and the Waterpark because they were for middle-class Jewish youths

whereas the J.L.B. definitely appealed to 'working-class' boys and to 'lower-middle-class' boys, at least up to the age of 16.[77]

The local J.L.B. was never able to attract all the Jewish boys from working-class families into the movement, however, because many parents in such families apparently objected to the militaristic tone of the movement. Working-class resistance to the movement, both in Manchester and around the country, was frequently commented upon in the Jewish Chronicle.[78] During the First World War, the local J.L.B. was seen by some working-class Jewish parents as a recruiting ground for the British Army. One ex-member during World War One recalled, for instance, how:

> a lot of people objected to the wearing of khaki and rifle drill and wouldn't send their boys to the club. They thought it was a recruiting place for the army. 79

Such feelings must also have been rife even after the First World War because boys who joined the local J.L.B. were still required to wear khaki uniforms on certain occasions (in camp

77. M.S.O.H.A., Tape J43.
78. H. Solomon, 'The Aims, Methods and Achievements of the Manchester Jewish Lads' Brigade against the Background of British Youth Movements 1883-1914', Diploma in Local History, Manchester Polytechnic, 1984, Chapter 5.
79. M.S.O.H.A., Tape S1.

and on special ceremonial occasions) as late as 1932.[80] The Officers also preferred it if their members wore khaki uniform when parading on Sundays, although this was not obligatory by the 1930s.[81]

The other source of much working-class opposition to the J.L.B. before the First World War was rifle drill. This continued to be practiced at the local J.L.B. in the 1920s and, in addition to drilling with rifles, local J.L.B. members were also taught rifle shooting in the 1920s:

> a very large number of lads have been... trained to shoot well,

it was reported in the J.L.B.'s annual report for 1921.[82] Provincial J.L.B. companies were advised by the Headquarters Staff in London to tone down the militaristic flavour of the movement in the 1920s; but the local J.L.B., it seems, simply ignored these warnings and proceeded to cultivate the military spirit. The J.L.B. leadership in London made radical changes in order to improve the Brigade's image there; the khaki uniform was abolished altogether in London, for instance, in 1921 and replaced by a less symbolically laden

80. Manchester J.L.B., Officers Minutes, 4 September 1923 - 5 March 1934. See the comments made at a meeting on 4 April 1932.
81. id., 7 December 1931. See also Manchester J.L.B., Officers and Managers, Executive and Subscribers, Minutes, March 1934 - June 1939, 29 April 1935. At the meeting held on 29 April 1935 some local J.L.B. officials suggested that the khaki uniform should be abolished altogether, but this proposal was rejected by those present.
82. J.L.B., Annual Report 1921, pp.16, 60.

uniform of 'leather belt, white haversack and blue service cap with blue band and Brigade badge'.[83] But J.L.B. officers in Manchester not only insisted on retaining the khaki uniform after 1921; they also remained convinced that 'a system of military training' was still the best way to inculcate 'orderly and cleanly habits in boys'. As a result, military parades, indoor and outdoor rifle shooting, drill (infantry, physical and rifle drill), and military camps during the summer remained the core activities of the local J.L.B. during the 1920s and 1930s.[84]

The militaristic air of the local J.L.B. in the years between the two World Wars did nothing to improve the Brigade's image; not just among working-class Jewish families but among the citizens of Manchester as a whole. In May 1921, J.L.B. Battalions from a number of towns and cities took part in a display to raise money for the local J.L.B. which, sincethe beginning of 1920, had been:

> in a critical position, depleted of officers, low in numbers of members, and nearly at the end of its financial resources. 85

83. id., p.12.
84. id., p.60; J.L.B., Annual Report 1923, pp.35-6; id., Annual Report 1932, p.55; id., Annual Report 1933, pp.61-2; id., Annual Report 1934, p.51; id., Annual Report 1935, pp.68-69. See also Manchester J.L.B., Officers Minutes, op.cit., passim; Officers and Managers, Executive and Subscribers, Minutes, op.cit., passim.
85. J.L.B., Annual Report 1921, p.5.

The display was held at Manchester Hippodrome and among the activities on display were physical training, squad drill, guard mounting and Zouave drill. A Bugle band also played at the display. The meeting was addressed by Colonel S.L. Mandleberg, the Honorary Colonel of the local J.L.B., who:

> made an earnest appeal for funds to enable the work of the Manchester Battalion to be carried on successfully.86

Sir Edwin Stockton, the President of Manchester Chamber of Commerce, also spoke in support of the local J.L.B. at the meeting and defended the decision to appeal to the public for funds, arguing that the local J.L.B. was an important mechanism for:

> the building up of character and the production of good citizens. 87

Despite these two appeals for funds, however, the event did not raise much money for the local J.L.B. Exactly how much the event raised is unclear, but it was stated in the local J.L.B.'s annual report for 1921 that:

86. id., p.10.
87. ibid.

> it is regrettable that the result in this direction was not satisfactory. 88

Though the local J.L.B. managed to survive the 1920s, largely due to the help it received from rich Jewish businessmen like Nathan Laski, its debts began to mount in the 1930s and, as fewer people were prepared to donate money to the movement, its whole existence was clearly under threat. A report on the work of the local J.L.B. appeared in the Jewish Gazette in October 1931. The author, almost certainly one of the officers of the local J.L.B., remarked that the local J.L.B.'s work:

> appears to be so little appreciated by the Community as a whole. 89

Two months earlier, an account of the local J.L.B.'s annual camping trip had also appeared in the Jewish Gazette. This account contained a desperate plea for money for the local Brigade: 'This year', it was stated:

> it has only been by good fortune that it [the local J.L.B.] has been able to hold a camp at all... If the Community wants the work to continue it must come forward in increasing measure with its financial and moral support. 90

88. ibid.
89. J.G., 1 October 1931.
90. J.G., 6 August 1931.

Both of these reports were addressed to the Jewish community alone, but it was clearly divided both about the value of the J.L.B.'s work and about the methods of training the J.L.B. used. Interestingly, there is no evidence that the local J.L.B. ever appealed to the citizens of Manchester as a whole for financial assistance during the 1930s. This was presumably because the local movement felt that it did not have the support of Manchester citizens.

By April 1932, the local J.L.B. was over £4,000 in debt.[91] The officers at the J.L.B.'s headquarters in Bury New Road, Cheetham, had arranged a large loan with the bank in order to build a new library and a games room (for 'quiet games'). But this ambitious scheme proved financially crippling to the local movement. In January 1933, the Commanding Officer of the local J.L.B., Colonel E.C.Q. Henriques, sent a letter to the Jewish Chronicle appealing to the Jewish community at large for funds. Henriques pointed out in the letter, which was published in a January issue of the paper, that the local movement still owed the bank £3,000 and that, on top of this, the local J.L.B. was having to find £150 a year out of its own funds to pay off the interest on the overdraft.[92] Henriques' appeal was obviously not successful because one year later, in March 1934, the local

91. Manchester J.L.B., Scrapbook.
92. ibid.

J.L.B. was still around £3,000 in debt to the bank.[93]

Various schemes were initiated to try to raise revenue for the movement during these difficult years. In May 1934, the local J.L.B.'s Treasurer and Medical Officer, Dr.P.I.Wigoder, sent letters out to ex-members of the J.L.B. to encourage them to become annual subscribers (i.e. to donate money to the movement). But, at the officers' monthly meeting in June 1934, he reported that the response had been 'disappointing'.[94] Other schemes for raising money were tried, including boxing competitions, dances and book competitions. But none of these alleviated the local J.L.B.'s financial problems. The movement's Treasurer reported at the Annual General Meeting in 1935 that 'the position of the Club's finances was a serious one' and he informed the other officers and managers of the local J.L.B. who were present that more subscribers (i.e. more donations) were desperately needed.[95] This meeting was held in April 1935, but in November 1935 the local J.L.B. still owed the bank almost £3,000.[96] The movement's finances were clearly in a chaotic state by November 1935: the canteen was

93. ibid.
94. Manchester J.L.B., Officers and Managers...., Minutes, op.cit. See the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 1934.
95. id., 18 April 1935.
96. id., 4 November 1935.

losing money and the Annual Camp, which normally generated money, had in fact eaten deeply into the movement's financial resources. '[T]he Camp recruits showed a loss of 4/6d per head', it was reported. These losses were blamed fairly and squarely on the movement's Treasurer, Captain Cassell, who was forced to resign as Treasurer in November 1935.[97]

Early in 1936, the movement came under severe pressure from the bank, which instructed the Brigade's officers, in a letter, to take immediate steps to reduce the huge overdraft.[98] In an effort to raise money, the local J.L.B. organised a wrestling match in Alexandra Park in March 1936, but only £25 was raised at this event.[99] The bank was still 'pressing for a reduction of the overdraft' when the officers met for their monthly meeting in March 1936 and the J.L.B.'s future still looked bleak because subscriptions were coming in

97. ibid. It is interesting to note that the local J.L.B. again appealed to the Jewish Community at large for funds in its annual report for 1935. This appeal was carefully worded (containing the phrase 'the Treasurer's appeal to the generosity of the public to donate liberally'), but it had an air of desperation about it: 'The Bank are pressing for money - do not let us appeal in vain'. J.L.B., Annual Report 1935, pp.67-8.
98. Manchester J.L.B., Officers and Managers...., Minutes, op.cit. 13 January 1936.
99. id., 3 February 1936; id., 2 March 1936.

'very slowly'.[100] The bank kept pressing the J.L.B.'s officers to reduce the overdraft throughout the remainder of 1936 and throughout 1937, too; but, owing to the lack of big donations, the local J.L.B. was simply unable to reduce its overdraft. In fact, the overdraft increased slightly: it stood at £3,100 in November 1937, for instance.[101]

The difficulties the local J.L.B.'s officers encountered in their efforts to raise funds for the movement in the 1930s seem to indicate that the movement was losing the support of rich members of the Jewish community. As we have already seen, the local movement did have access to the Jewish media and made use of this access by publicly appealing to the Jewish community for funds in national newspapers like the Jewish Chronicle. But these appeals, and the various schemes that were organised locally to raise money for the Brigade, did not prove successful in raising much-needed finance for the local J.L.B. In January 1938, exactly five years after Henriques had appealed to the Jewish community at large for money for the local Brigade, the local J.L.B.'s Treasurer informed the other officers and managers of the local

100. ibid.
101. id., 29 November 1937.

Brigade that the movement's financial difficulties were getting worse rather than better. He told them that the position at the bank had become 'very serious' and indicated that expenditure 'was increasing out of all proportion to income'.[102]

Increasing indebtedness was not the only problem local J.L.B. leaders faced in this period. Like the Lads' Club leaders and Boy Scout leaders locally, the J.L.B.'s officials found it difficult to keep older boys interested in Brigade life:

> Much thought and energy is devoted to attempts to retain the connection of lads with the Club for a long period of years,

it was pointed out in the J.L.B.'s annual report for 1932. But it was admitted that:

> despite all these efforts... it is still found that large numbers are constantly passing through after a membership of only a few weeks or months. This... is... a feature common to all lads' clubs. 103

102. id., 31 January 1938.
103. J.L.B., Scrapbook, op.cit.

Another problem all local youth leaders encountered in the 1920s and 1930s, and one overlooked by historians of youth movements, was that they had to provide activities that the membership demanded rather than activities that its leaders thought would be beneficial to boys. Educational classes were considered desirable by both Lads' Club leaders and by the J.L.B.'s leaders; but they were rejected by the membership and had to be withdrawn. Two local examples illustrate this point. English and Hebrew classes were introduced at the local J.L.B. in 1932, but had to be dropped after only a few months because of low attendances.[104] Educational classes met with a similar fate in Ancoats Lads' Club in 1933.[105] The activities that proved most popular, both at local Lads' Clubs and at the J.L.B., were non-academic ones such as billiards, table tennis, cricket, football and boxing. The local J.L.B. was particularly strong at boxing. Its boxing

104. M.G., 27 May 1932.
105. Educational classes in reading, writing, arithmetic, elementary book-keeping and shorthand were introduced at the Ancoats Lads' Club in September 1926 but, owing to low attendances, these were stopped in 1933. See A.L.C., Annual Report 1926, p.7; id., Annual Report 1933, p.4. On the lack of appeal of educational classes at other local Lads' Clubs see A.L.M.C., Annual Report 1924-5, p.5; id., Annual Report 1935-6, p.4; H.S.M.L.C., Annual Report 1927, p.6; id., Annual Report, 1928, p.9; id., Annual Report 1929, p.8.

team won the Prince of Wales Boxing Shield, inaugurated in 1925, five times in the first six years of the competition.[106] Billiards was another popular activity at the local J.L.B. and billiard tables were an important source of revenue both at the J.L.B. and at other local Lads' Clubs, too, of course.[107]

What conclusions can we draw, then, from the above account of youth work among boys in Manchester in the 1920s and 1930s ? The main conclusion is that these years were difficult ones for the Lads' Club movement locally, for the Boy Scouts locally and for the J.L.B. locally. All three organisations were unable to solve the basic problem of boys drifting away when the activities that were on offer ceased to be of relevance to them. In addition, the officials at local Lads' Clubs were forced to modify or abandon their aims - particularly their ideas about 'building up the character' of working-class boys - in an attempt to keep working boys interested in club life. Local youth leaders still claimed that their organisations existed in order to 'build up the character' of working-class boys in this period. The local J.L.B. still claimed, as late as 1935, for instance, that it

106. J.L.B., Scrapbook, op.cit.; J.G., 1 October 1931; D.E., 11 September 1931.
107. Manchester J.L.B., Officers and Managers..., Minutes, op.cit. 9 April 1934; id., 11 March 1935; id., 2 December 1935; id., 28 March 1938. On billiard tables as an important source of revenue in Lads' Clubs, see C.E.B.Russell and L.M.Russell, Lads' Clubs: Their History, Organisation and Management, London 1932, Part II, Chapter III. 'If the club is fortunate enough to possess one, there will.. be receipts from a billiard-table, and assuming that this is used for three hours each evening for six days a week, at a charge of 1d a half hour for every lad playing... there will be a revenue from this source of 2s a night - 12s a week, and, let us say, £20 during the season' (p.44).

existed:

> to train its members in loyalty, honour, discipline and self-respect, that they shall become worthy and useful citizens, and a credit to their Country and their Community. 108

But such training was bound to be a protracted process and, as we have seen, local J.L.B. leaders openly admitted on other occasions that most boys did not remain members of the organisation long enough for such noble ideals to have been realised. There was also an obvious discrepancy between the ideals of local youth leaders in this period and the activities that were popular at their clubs. It is difficult to see, for instance, how the character of working boys was built up through activities such as billiards and table tennis which, along with football, dominated club life at local Lads' Clubs in the 1920s and 1930s.

It should be obvious from the above discussion, therefore, that the inter-war period was an important period for boys' organisations locally. The leaders of these organisations - certainly the leaders of Lads' Clubs, the Boy Scouts and the Jewish Lads' Brigade - were all forced to face up to certain problems which, though not unique to it, escalated

108.J.L.B., Annual Report 1935, p.70.

during this period and led to profound changes in the style and content of local youth work in this period. The most serious problem local youth leaders encountered was the tendency of boys to drift away from their organisations at a time when it was felt to be most important that they remained under the caring influence of middle-class adults; that is, between the ages of 14 and 16, the 'critical' adolescent years according to those who advised local youth leaders which age-groups to pitch their organisations at.[109] This was not a new problem in the '20s and '30s, but it was only in these years that local youth leaders began to discuss possible ways of keeping teenage wage-earning boys interested in club life openly, in such journals as the Social Service Bulletin; in books which offered advice on the running of Lads' Clubs such as C.E.B. Russell and L.M. Russell's Lads' Clubs: Their History, Organisation and Management (1932) and in their annual reports, which devoted much space to extremely frank discussions of the difficulties involved in making clubs more attractive to older teenage boys from the late 1920s onwards. Such evidence implies that, though the problem of drift was not new in the 1920s and 1930s, it only began to reach serious proportions in these years.

109.Griffith and Joseph, op.cit., p.112.

To what extent did girls' organisations locally experience the difficulties that most of the organisations for boys experienced ? It would seem from the limited evidence available that they did. Joan L.Harley found that only a third of the girls she interviewed in the mid-'30s were members of a youth organisation and the majority of these, she argued, had an extremely casual attitude towards club life. Two-thirds of the girls she spoke to who were members of clubs only visited the club once a week, yet most clubs for girls met two or three times a week.[110]

The main reason why girls' clubs did not appeal to more working girls, Harley argued, was because the existing clubs were overrun with schoolgirls and the activities pursued in them were seen as childish by the girls she spoke to. One 16 year old working girl told her:

> I think Girl Guides are daft. I don't like wearing a uniform and parading through the streets. 111

Other girls she spoke to had belonged to the Girl Guide movement as schoolgirls, but now that they were wage-earners they felt that they had outgrown the movement and would have felt

110.Harley, op.cit., pp.85,89.
111.id., p.84.

'silly and self-conscious in uniforms'. Harley thus concluded:

> The Girl Guide movement seems to appeal much more to girls of school age than to older girls. At 16, when the time comes for them to join a Ranger company, many leave the movement altogether. 112

Such drift, as we have seen, also affected the local Boy Scout movement and particularly the work of the Rover troops in the 1920s and 1930s.

Another reason why movements like the Girl Guides did not appeal to working girls, Harley argued, was that such movements were single-sex organisations which offered extremely limited opportunities for meeting boys.[113] She found that the organisations that proved most popular among the girls she interviewed were not movements like the Girl Guides and the Rangers but clubs organised around churches. This was because, at such clubs, there were numerous opportunities for girls to meet boys.[114]

One of the most interesting of Harley's findings about youth organisations for girls locally in the 1920s and 1930s was that most of the girls she spoke to who were members of clubs were working-class girls from ordinary working-class

112. ibid.
113. id., pp.92, 95.
114. id., pp.86, 95.

families. Around two-thirds of the girls who were club members, in fact, lived in 'poor or slum districts' and had left full-time education at the age of 14. In addition, many club members were manual workers such as machinists, box makers, packers, printers and hairdressers.[115] Thus there are no grounds for arguing that clubs only attracted particular types of girls who were employed in particular occupations. It is not possible, for instance, to argue that clubs only attracted socially aspiring girls who were employed in genteel occupations such as office work and shops. In short, clubs appealed to working-class girls as well as to girls who, on the basis of their occupation, might have claimed to be lower-middle-class or even middle-class, such as shop girls and office girls.[116]

Neither social class, nor occupation, nor lack of money were barriers that prevented girls from joining a girls' club.[117] But age was extremely important in determining when girls left a club. Fortunately, information is available on the ages of girls who were members of girls' clubs in Manchester in 1934. This information is included in Madeline Rooff's study, Youth and Leisure: A Survey of Girls' Organisations In England and Wales which was published in 1935. The

115. id., pp.87, 90-1, 95. See also A.D.K.Owen, A Survey of Juvenile Employment and Welfare in Sheffield, Sheffield 1933, p.40 on the mixed social backgrounds of youth movement members in Sheffield.
116. These two groups also joined girls' organisations locally. See Harley, op.cit., p.87.
117. id., p.91.

statistics cited in this study confirm the conclusions Harley arrived at in her more impressionistic study. Two of the clubs Harley mentioned, Manchester Girls' Institute and Heyrod Street Girls' Club, provided Rooff with details of the age-groups who joined the clubs. The former organisation had nearly 600 members in 1934, 300 of whom were younger than 14 and 225 of whom were older than 18. Only 60 members of this club, in other words, were between 14 and 18.[118] Heyrod Street Girls' Club was also dominated by schoolgirls under 14: it had around 400 members in 1934, 312 of whom were younger than 14 and 56 of whom were older than 18. Only 37 members of this club were between the ages of 14 and 18.[119]

It is easy to see why teenage working girls lost interest in clubs like the ones mentioned above when they began wage-earning at 14. The activities on offer were not activities which would appeal to girls who had money to spend on commercial entertainments. They were either activities that were associated with Day Schools or Sunday Schools, such as gymnastics and Bible classes; or activities that were aimed at married women such as mothers' meetings, clothing clubs,

118. M.Rooff, Youth and Leisure: A Survey of Girls' Organisations In England and Wales, Edinburgh 1935, p.191.

119. id., p.192. The eldest members of the club, it seems, were mostly married women since mothers' meetings were a regular feature at the club. See, for instance, Manchester and Salford Girls' Institutes (M.S.G.I.), Annual Report 1918-19, p.4; id., Annual Report 1919-20, p.4; id., Annual Report 1920-21, p.4; Manchester Girls' Institute, Annual Report 1922-3, pp.4-5.

laundry classes and sick-nursing classes. All of the above were regular weekly activities at the Manchester Girls' Institute.[120]

One of the women who helped to run the Manchester Girls' Institute, Margaret Pilkington, also helped to set up and run the Pioneer Club for Girl Clerks and Typists. This club was opened in May 1916 to meet the following need:

> the girl [clerk or typist], placed suddenly in the whirl of city life, alone perhaps and unable to secure for herself a sufficient amount of rest, recreation and nourishing food, tends to lose both health and spirits. She needs above all companionship; some place where she can go if she is tired and lonely or depressed, where she will be sure of meeting with comfort and sympathy... 121

The Pioneer Club was set up, therefore, essentially to provide a meeting place for girl clerks and typists who worked at business firms in the city, many of whom lived in lodgings and were thus 'cut off from home influence' in the words of one of the club's officials.[122] The officials who ran the club, a group of philanthropic middle-class women,

120. ibid.
121. Manchester Pioneer Club, Reports etc. 1916-1933, M.C.R.L., Archives Department (MS F 369.48 M40). Handwritten report on 'The Opening of the Pioneer Club for Girl Clerks and Typists'.
122. id., 'An Important and Pressing City Need' (typescript).

clearly hoped, though, that the club would be more than simply a meeting place for such girls. Their intention was to make it the centre of a city girl clerk or typist's social life in the evenings.

By the end of 1917, the organisers had gone a long way towards achieving this aim: a wide range of activities had become established at the club, including Art classes, Bible Study classes, Drama classes, Gymnastics classes, Music classes and Physical Efficiency classes. In addition, a 'Rambling Circle' organised regular rambles and picnics during the summer months and the club had a Hockey team, a 'Riding Circle 'and a Swimming club by the close of 1917.[123] The club even launched its own magazine, The Pioneer News, in March 1918. In the first issue, its editor (Margaret Pilkington), who was obviously in buoyant spirits following the early success of the club, wrote:

> let us go ahead to make every girl who has to earn her living in Manchester, be grateful for the existence of the Pioneer Club.

She then outlined the aims of the club in the following words:

123. The Pioneer Club, Winter Programme, 1917; id., Annual Report 1917-18.

> I think we all want this Club to be a training ground for good citizens as well as a pleasant centre of social life. 124

This statement is particularly revealing because it indicates that the club did not simply have a middle-class clientele. It appealed to girls lower down the social hierarchy who needed to be taught the value of good citizenship by middle-class women. A further indication of this, is that Elocution classes were held regularly at the club. This suggests that the clientele of the club would certainly have included upwardly mobile working-class girls as well as girls who might have regarded themselves as middle-class.[125] Unfortunately, no concrete evidence exists on the social background of individual members of the club in its early years; but it was pointed out, in an article on the club which appeared in the Manchester City News in December 1932, that its members were from a range of occupations. 'A random selection of its 250 members', it was pointed out:

> shows such varied types as a nurse; a school teacher; a bank clerk; a typist; a research student; a chauffeur, a shop girl, and a dispenser. 126

124. The Pioneer News, March 1918. The magazine cost 6d a copy. Only one issue survives. This may have been the only issue that was printed.
125. Pioneer Club, Annual Report 1919-20, p.2; id., Annual Report, 1920-21.
126. M.C.N., 10 December 1932.

The Pioneer Club was forced to close in March 1933, partly because of its substantial debts; but also because the membership was falling off sharply.[127] The membership had increased at a healthy rate in the early years. At the end of 1921, it had 500 members. The membership had risen to over 600 members by the end of 1923 and the club still had over 600 members at the end of 1925.[128] But after 1925, the membership and the activities that were carried out at the club began to contract markedly. The club's country residence, Candlin House in West Kirby, had to be closed in 1927 because the members were not visiting the place. Furthermore, all the other activities at the club, with the exception of the 'Riding Circle', lost members in the 1920s.[129] Most of the club's members in these years simply used the club during the daytime 'as a place for rest and entertainment between office hours'.[130] Few members were prepared to attend the club in the evenings in the late 1920s. It was stated in one report, for instance, that:

127. Pioneer Club, Annual Report 1932-3, pp.1-2.
128. Pioneer Club, Annual Report 1920-21; id., Annual Report 1921-2; id., Annual Report 1922-3, p.3; id., Annual Report 1924-5, p.3.
129. Pioneer Club, Annual Report 1924-25, p.3; id., Annual Report 1926-27; id., Annual Report 1929-30, p.2; id., Annual Report 1930-31, p.3; id., Annual Report 1932-3, p.2.
130. Pioneer Club for Girl Clerks and Typists, Reports c 1916-1933.

> Many of them live outside the city and prefer to find their evening recreation nearer home. 131

This bleak picture of club life at the Pioneer Club in the late 1920s is a world away from the vibrant and extremely healthy state of club life in the early 1920s when, in a typical week, the wide range of activities available in the evenings included Dancing classes, Embroidery classes, Gymnastics classes, Millinery classes, Painting classes, Singing classes, an Orchestra, a'Bridge Circle'and a'Reading Circle'.132

The officials at the Pioneer Club appear to have accepted the turnaround in the club's fortunes in the late 1920s as an act of fate. They certainly made no effort to revitalise club life in the way that Lads' Club leaders in the city did, for instance. Instead, they simply allowed the club to become a place where girl clerks and typists purchased meals during their lunch hours. When the club's restaurant even began to lose members in 1932, due to the proliferation of 'countless cafés and restaurants serving astonishingly cheap meals', the very existence of the club was regarded as

131. ibid.
132. Pioneer Club, Annual Report 1919-20, p.2; id., Annual Report 1920-21.

no longer worthwhile by the officials who ran it, so it closed for good on 25 March 1933.[133]

The four case studies discussed above hopefully show beyond doubt that the 1920s and 1930s saw a turnaround in the fortunes of both the major youth movements (the Lads' Clubs, the Boy Scouts and the Jewish Lads' Brigade) and minor ones such as the Pioneer Club for Girl Clerks and Typists; both in Manchester and in other cities like Liverpool and Sheffield.[134] All of these organisations began to experience problems in the '20s and '30s, but youth movement historians have largely overlooked these problems, probably because they continue to focus only on the progress of movements like the Boy Scouts and the Jewish Lads' Brigade up to, at the latest, 1922.[135]

The chapter has shown how local youth leaders coped with the problem of 'drift' and with the fact that the typical club member at the close of our period was likely to have an extremely casual approach to club life rather than a

133. Pioneer Club, Annual Report 1931-32; id., Annual Report 1932-33, p.1.
134. See above pp. 312-315 on Manchester and Liverpool. See Owen, op.cit., p.39 on the difficulties the Scout and Guide movements in Sheffield encountered in trying to appeal to boys and girls of 15 and upwards.
135. See, for instance, A.Warren, 'Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the Scout movement and citizen training in Great Britain, 1900-1920', E.H.R., Vol.CI, No.399, April 1986, pp.376-398; J.Springhall, 'Baden-Powell and the Scout Movement before 1920: Citizen Training or Soldiers of the Future?', E.H.R., Vol.CII, No.405, October 1987, pp.934-942; R.A.Voeltz, "'...A Good Jew and a Good Englishman': The Jewish Lads' Brigade, 1894-1922", J.C.H., Vol.23, No.1, January 1988, pp.119-127.

committed approach, partly owing to the emergence of new leisure pursuits for the teenage wage-earner of both sexes in the 1920s and 1930s, such as cycling, hiking and private camping; and at how they responded to the intensification of already habitual leisure pursuits such as cinemagoing and dancing. It has been argued that there was no uniform response among local youth leaders to the problems which beset their movements in this period, even though the problems were the same in most cases. Whilst the officials at local Lads' Clubs were prepared to make radical changes in order to make their clubs more attractive to teenage wage-earning boys - clubs like Heyrod Street Lads' Club and Ancoats Lads' Club being transformed almost into embryonic youth clubs - the local Boy Scout leadership made no attempts to 'modernise', despite the fact that the membership was falling in the 1930s. The Rover Movement, which was specifically intended for older teenage boys, must have seemed astonishingly staid even to former Boy Scouts because few Boy Scouts made the transition from the Boy Scouts to the Rovers. Rover work was work for the local community, such as giving blood, helping out at important civic events and helping out at local hospitals. Though this work was valuable to the local community, it was never likely to appeal to large numbers of older teenage boys in the way that the Scouts appealed to large numbers of schoolboys; both middle-class and working-class schoolboys.

Local youth leaders encountered other difficulties in this period, besides recruitment difficulties. The J.L.B.'s major problem was a lack of finance,which threatened to curtail the work of the local J.L.B. altogether in the 1930s. No other youth organisation in the city encountered such protracted financial difficulties to the same extent as this organisation. The J.L.B.'s inability to attract new subscribers in the 1930s, when its financial problems were most acute, was undoubtedly a consequence of its overtly militaristic methods and general tone: middle-class Jews who could have put up the money to support the movement were clearly divided over its usefulness.

To conclude, then, a number of youth organisations that were active locally began to experience serious problems in the 1920s and 1930s, long before these were belatedly uncovered by independent social investigators in the early stages of the Second World War.

CONCLUSION.

This thesis has attempted to shed light on the lifestyle of the young working-class wage-earner in one provincial city in the 1920s and 1930s. It has examined, in some detail, his or her labour market behaviour; attitude towards employers and work; whether the young wage-earner was afflicted by unemployment and, finally, whether he or she was the chief beneficiary of the tremendous growth and diversification of commercialised entertainment in this period.[1] What broad conclusions emerge from the study ?

A theme which runs through the whole thesis and perhaps the principal finding is that the lives of young wage-earners, of both sexes, in Manchester were not as circumscribed as those of young wage-earners in other parts of the north-west. In towns like Barrow, Lancaster and Preston, '[l]ack of financial and moral independence [from parents] was also reflected in the young people's lack of choice about the sort of work they did', according to Elizabeth Roberts.[2] But this somewhat depressing picture of the lives of young wage-earners from working-class families in the 1920s and 1930s

1. On the dramatic growth and diversification of commercialised entertainment in this period, see S.G.Jones, Workers At Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure 1918-1939, London 1986, Chapter 2.
2. E.Roberts, Woman's Place, op.cit., p.45.

needs to be qualified. In cities like Manchester, young wage-earners, girls as well as boys, exercised a considerable degree of autonomy on the labour market, at work and in the leisure sphere.

Chapter 1 highlighted the initiative young wage-earners showed in seeking work. All too frequently, they rejected the advice their parents or Juvenile Employment Bureau officials or employers gave them about what was suitable employment and decided for themselves what work was suitable. It must be said, however, that the buoyant state of the labour market for juvenile workers locally undoubtedly allowed them the luxury of this choice.

It was also argued, in Chapter 1, that the labour market for young wage-earners locally was far more fluid than contemporaries were prepared to admit. Social investigators who argued that youngsters in so-called 'blind-alley' employments such as messenger work and van boy work were destined to be thrown out of employment at 16 or 18 and eventually to become 'industrial nomads' or casual labourers were, to a large degree, alarmists. They overlooked a considerable body of evidence which suggests that many youngsters left such employments voluntarily at 16 or thereabouts to take up apprenticeships. They also overlooked the fact that those who remained in such employments frequently remained in

them beyond the age of 16 or 18. Contemporaries were concerned about such work because of the long hours youngsters were obliged to work and because of the lack of opportunity this allowed for further education. Such work, however, had its attractions. The wages earned were significantly higher than the wages paid to trade apprentices and, as some of the case studies cited in Chapter 2 show, work that was not intellectually demanding was satisfying for other reasons. Ultimately, if the work they were doing offered no rewards, young wage-earners locally simply left their jobs to find work which did provide satisfaction.

Chapter 2 showed that young wage-earners displayed a considerable degree of autonomy at work, as well as on the labour market. The teenage group were not deferential workers. Their relationship with employers was a fragile one. On occasions they came into direct conflict with employers. This was clearly seen in the case study of the Manchester and Salford engineering apprentices' strike in September 1937. Over 13,000 engineering apprentices locally participated in this strike, which lasted almost one month; they organised it entirely themselves and they achieved an important victory over their employers (a 2s wage rise). The girl workers at one local firm organised a sympathy strike in support of the engineering apprentices (who were all male) and there is evidence that girl wage-earners in other parts of the country

came into direct conflict with their employers during this period.[3] In short, it appears that where girl wage-earners, as a group, had a genuine grievance against an employer, they were no more deferential than boys were.

If young wage-earners' experiences on the labour market and at work were not as circumscribed by the wishes of Juvenile Employment Bureau officials, employers and parents, as recent historians have suggested, their lives outside work were relatively free from constraints of any kind. Elizabeth Roberts argues that:

> while young people [in central and north Lancashire] remained at home, they had to live according to their parents' rules. 4

One such rule, she argues, was that the young wage-earners handed over their unopened wage-packets to their mothers and received only a few coppers back for spending money. Such a system meant that saving up for marriage was a protracted process and lack of savings explains why young people from working-class families married late.[5] Chapter 4 of this thesis

3. See above, p.143; See also D.H., 11 September 1937. 50 factory girls at the Massa Sparking Plug Company in Wimbledon were sacked on 10 September 1937. When they heard of this decision, some of the girls became 'hysterical' and another group 'began to wreck the building'. They dismantled machinery, pulled down benches, overturned desks and destroyed material'.
4. E.Roberts, Woman's Place, op.cit., p.44.
5. id., pp.42-3.

argued a different case. Young wage-earners of both sexes locally spent much of their free time, from the age of 15 or 16 onwards, indulging in pursuits which cost money. Cinemagoing and dancing were habitual pursuits for boys and girls between the ages of 15 and 21. Some did one or the other or both as often as six times a week.It was argued that this age-group had the disposable income to pursue such activities. All the social investigators who studied the income and expenditure of working-class households acknowledged this. They either implied, or stated explicitly, that young wage-earners in such families enjoyed a better lifestyle or standard of living than the other members of the family and particularly than mothers and younger children.

It was also argued in Chapter 4 that leisure entrepreneurs, manufacturers of consumer products such as cosmetics, motor cycles and soft drinks and magazine proprietors began to tap the teenage market in the 1920s and 1930s. The dance halls which opened in Manchester immediately after the First World War catered exclusively for the 'young, free and single' wage-earner. Moreover, local cinema managers began to show films that would appeal to the teenage group rather than to adult audiences in the 1920s. Films like Blindness of Youth (1920), Jazz Mania (1920) and Movietone Follies of 1929 (1929)-described in a local what's-on magazine as 'a song and dance talking film' about 'Youth with a capital Y' -

were all screened with teenage wage-earners clearly in mind. Finally, manufacturers of consumer products began advertising in the magazines that were started for young wage-earners in this period such as Peg's Paper (1919), Boys' Cinema (1919), Girls' Cinema (1920), The Motor Cycle Book For Boys (1927), Oracle (1933) and Glamour (1938).

The conclusion reached in Chapter 4, therefore, was that young wage-earners from working-class families were the chief beneficiaries of the new world of commercialised leisure in the 1920s and 1930s. This forms the second principal conclusion of the thesis. The third is that, in many respects, their spending patterns and lifestyles outside work were similar to those of 'teenagers' in the 1950s. Both frequented cinemas, dance halls and milk bars (there were 18 milk bars in Manchester by 1938);both were apparently obsessed with fashion and copied the fashions of their favourite film stars and both spent their disposable income on clothes, cosmetics, magazines, motor cycles and soft drinks.[6] It is, then, a mistake to assume,as some sociologists and media writers have done, that the teenager with 'money to spend' and entrepreneurs who were interested in tapping the teenage market only

6.See above Chapter 4 passim. It is implied in P.Everett's you'll never be 16 again: an illustrated history of the British teenager, London 1986, pp.10-11 that milk bars were a post-war development, but, as indicated above, there were a number in Manchester by the late 1930s. For the precise number, see C.Chisholm (ed.), Marketing Survey of the United Kingdom,1938, London 1939, p.210.

appeared in Britain after the Second World War. Both were already visible in Manchester and other towns and cities in the 1920s and 1930s.

The fourth and final broad conclusion that emerges from this study of the lives of young wage-earners in inter-war Manchester is that the 1920s and 1930s were crucial years in the history of youth movements. Local youth leaders either had to adapt their movements to the new leisure tastes of young wage-earners, or simply accept the steady drift of young wage-earning members away from club life. The officials at Lads' Clubs locally adopted the former strategy. They abandoned activities that were central to the work of Lads' Clubs before the First World War such as drill and completely revamped their clubs in the 1920s and 1930s, installing billiard tables, film projectors, wirelesses, roller-skating rinks and the officials at one local club even allowed dances to be held regularly. In effect, they transformed their clubs, which were previously sedate institutions where working boys could take up 'rational' or 'wholesome' leisure pursuits such as chess or reading, into embryonic youth clubs. The local Boy Scout movement, as we saw in Chapter 6, did not adapt to the new leisure interests of wage-earning boys and, consequently, it appears that it lost the support of such boys, having to rely, in the main, on schoolboys for support.

In many respects, therefore, the 1920s and 1930s were the years when the lifestyle of the young working-class wage-earner began to change and not the 1950s and 1960s. The lives of young wage-earners outside work were already being transformed by leisure entrepreneurs in the earlier period, as we saw in Chapter 4, and the spending patterns of teenage wage-earners in this period were strikingly similar to those of post-war 'teenagers'. Moral panics among authority figures worried about the corrupting influence of the mass media on the 'younger generation' also surfaced in the 1920s and 1930s, as Chapter 5 of this thesis demonstrated. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 6, youth leaders were having to adapt their movements to the changing leisure tastes of the young wage-earner in the 1920s and 1930s. It is hoped that these conclusions, which emerge from Chapters 4-6 of this thesis, and those drawn earlier in the thesis about the labour market behaviour of young wage-earners in the 1920s and 1930s (Chapter 1); about their attitudes towards work and employers (Chapter 2) and about their experiences of unemployment (Chapter 3), will interest sociologists, economic historians, social historians and urban historians.

Finally, the thesis has perhaps one overall conclusion: the young working-class wage-earner in inter-war Manchester was, as this thesis has hopefully demonstrated, capable of creating his or her own lifestyle despite (and perhaps because

of) attempts by adults to shape their behaviour, both in the work sphere and in the leisure sphere.[7]

7. For a similar interpretation of a different subject, see E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, 1963 Middlesex 1979 edn.

APPENDIX.

Table 1: The Teenage Workforce of Manchester in 1921.[1]

	Number in employment or seeking employment	Total number in the age-group	Percentage of the age-group in employment or seeking employment
BOYS (14-19)	34, 505	39,925	86.4
GIRLS (14-19)	32, 777	42,432	77.2

1. The 1921 Census, as indicated in the text, did not give the number of 14-19 year olds who were out of work on the day the Census was taken. The following Table clearly demonstrates though that the vast majority of 14-19 year old boys and girls in the city were either on the labour market or in work in 1921.

Source: Census of England and Wales 1921, County of Lancaster, London 1923, Table 18.

Table 2: The Teenage Workforce of Manchester in 1931.

	Number in employment or seeking employment	Total number in the age-group	Percentage of the age-group in employment or seeking employment
BOYS (14-20)	39,275[1]	44,831	87.6
GIRLS (14-20)	40,407[2]	47,965	84.2

1. The 1931 Census did give the number of 14-20 year olds who were in work on the day of the Census as well as the number who were out of work: 34,424 boys (87.6%) were in work and 4,851 (12.4%) were out of work.
2. Of these, 37,828 girls (93.6%) were in work on the day the 1931 Census was taken and 2,579 (6.4%) were out of work.

Source: Census of England and Wales 1931, Occupation Tables, London 1934, Table 18.

Table 3: Occupations of Teenage Workers in Manchester in 1921.

OCCUPATION	BOYS(under 20)[1]		GIRLS(under 20)	
	N	%	N	%
Metal Workers	7,486	21.7	752	2.3
Transport Workers	7,131	20.6	1,233	3.8
Clerks, Draughtsmen & Typists	5,559	16.1	4,882	14.9
Commerce & Finance	2,646	7.7	2,178	6.6
Warehousemen & Packers	2,082	6.0	1,934	5.9
Wood & Furniture Workers	1,465	4.2	198	0.6
General Labourers	1,282	3.7	-	-
Makers of Textile Goods & Dress	1,152	3.3	7,943	24.4
Electrical Apparatus Makers & Fitters	1,111	3.2	-	-
Textile Workers	1,070	3.1	5,458	16.6
Paper Workers & Printers	712	2.1	1,720	5.2
Personal Service	573	1.7	3,044	9.3
Makers of Foods, Drinks & Tobacco	410	1.2	883	2.7
Other[2]	1,876	5.4	2,582	7.9
Total Occupied	34,555	100.0	32,807	100.0

1. The following Table gives the occupations of all the boys and girls in the city who were between the ages of 12 and 20. Despite the Education Act of 1918, which supposedly made 14 the minimum school leaving age, there were 50 12 and 13 year old boys and 30 12 and 13 year old girls in full-time employment at the Census of 1921. See text, p.50.
2. Teenage workers of both sexes were employed in a myriad of other occupations (See above, pp.30-36). The Census enumerated only a few of these. The above category includes Builders and Bricklayers, Painters and Decorators, Teachers, Workers in Entertainment and a few others. For full details see Census of England and Wales 1921, op.cit.

Source: Census of England and Wales, op.cit.

Table 4: Occupations of Teenage Workers in Manchester in 1931.

OCCUPATION	BOYS(under 21)[1]		GIRLS(under 21)	
	N	%	N	%
Metal Workers	5,274	13.4	477	1.2
Commerce, Finance & Insurance	4,835	12.3	3,139	7.8
Transport & Communication Workers	4,683	11.9	1,084	2.7
Clerks, Draughtsmen & Typists	4,229	10.8	5,568	13.8
Labourers & Unskilled Factory Workers	3,812	9.7	2,656	6.6
Warehousemen & Storekeepers	2,470	6.3	2,460	6.1
Road Transport Workers	2,148	5.5	-	-
Wood & Furniture Workers	1,795	4.6	180	0.4
Textile Goods Workers	1,504	3.8	12,307	30.5
Personal Service	981	2.5	4,851	12.0
Electrical Apparatus Workers	952	2.4	-	-
Textile Workers	899	2.3	2,814	6.9
Paper & Cardboard Makers & Workers	271	0.7	1,309	3.2
Other[2]	5,422	13.8	3,562	8.8
Total Occupied	39,275	100.0	40,407	100.0

1. The following Table gives the occupations of all the boys and girls in the city who were between the ages of 14 and 21.
2. See note 2 of Table 3 above. For further details of the occupations included under this category, see Census of England and Wales 1931, op.cit.

Source: Census of England and Wales 1931, op.cit.

Table 5: Average Weekly Earnings of Boys and Girls in Selected Occupations, October 1935. 1.

Occupation.	Boys (under 21)	Girls (under 18)
Aircraft manufacture	22s 6d	21s 6d
Boot and Shoe repairing.	26s 6d	16s 9d
General engineering.	21s	18s 4d
Hosiery manufacture.	26s 1d	17s 6d
Locomotive engineering.	17s 3d	-
Textile bleaching, printing, dyeing and finishing.	24s 2d	16s 10d
Textile machinery making.	17s 10d	15s 1d
Transport (trams)	31s 9d	24s 5d

Source: Ministry of Labour Gazette, London 1937, pp.46-7, 88-9, 133-4, 174-5, 257-8.

1. The following statistics represent the average weekly wages of young manual workers in 76,000 industrial establishments throughout Great Britain in October 1935. The statistics were obtained by the Ministry of Labour for a national survey of the average earnings of all industrial workers throughout Great Britain.

Table 6: Unemployment among the under 18s in selected cities, 1927-1936 (percentage rate).*

DATE	LIVERPOOL	LONDON	MANCHESTER	SALFORD	SHEFFIELD
November 1927	17.5	2.6	3.4	10.8	11.2
November 1928	16.4	2.3	4.3	14.8	11.8
November 1929	15.8	1.7	5.2	10.1	9.0
November 1930	19.9	2.4	9.7	18.4	14.8
November 1931	20.4	3.4	7.7	13.3	17.4
November 1932	19.5	3.7	9.8	12.0	17.3
November 1933	15.6	1.8	6.6	9.8	7.2
November 1934	22.3	2.2	6.4	12.1	6.1
November 1935	25.1	1.9	5.0	9.6	4.2
November 1936	23.9	1.7	2.8	5.0	1.7

* The figures included in the above table are only estimates because not all of the 14-17 year olds registered themselves as unemployed (See above, p.). Nevertheless, they show quite well that the estimated level of juvenile unemployment in Manchester was significantly lower during these years than the estimated level of juvenile unemployment in the other cities named with the single exception of London.

Source: Ministry of Labour, Local Unemployment Index, January 1927-December 1937, London 1938.

Table 7: The Young Unemployed In Manchester, 27 April 1931.

GIRLS (14-20)

OCCUPATION	THE NUMBER OF 14-20 YEAR OLDS IN WORK	THE NUMBER OF 14-20 YEAR OLDS 'OUT OF WORK'	% OF 14-20 YEAR OLDS 'OUT OF WORK'
Textile Goods Workers	11,823	484	3.9
Clerks & Typists	5,357	211	3.8
Personal Service	4,570	281	5.8
Commerce, Finance & Insurance	2,913	226	7.2
Textile Workers	2,525	289	10.3
Labourers & Unskilled Factory Workers	2,396	260	9.8
Storekeepers & Packers	2,273	187	7.6
Paper & Cardboard Makers & Workers	1,224	85	6.5
Transport & Communication Workers	1,050	34	3.1
Others	9,977	522	4.9
Total	37,828	2,579	6.4

Source: Census of England and Wales 1931, Occupation Tables, London 1934, Table 18.

Table 8: The Young Unemployed In Manchester, 27 April 1931.

BOYS (14-20)

OCCUPATION	THE NUMBER OF 14-20 YEAR OLDS IN WORK	THE NUMBER OF 14-20 YEAR OLDS 'OUT OF WORK'	% OF 14-20 YEAR OLDS 'OUT OF WORK'
Metal Workers	4,296	978	18.5
Commerce, Finance & Insurance	4,503	332	6.9
Transport & Communication Workers	4,315	368	7.8
Clerks, Draughtsmen & Typists	3,955	274	6.5
Labourers & Unskilled Factory Workers	2,885	927	24.3
Warehousemen & Storekeepers	2,236	234	9.5
Road Transport Workers	1,957	191	8.9
Workers in Wood & Furniture	1,623	172	9.6
Textile Goods Workers	1,333	171	11.4
Workers in Precious Metals etc	953	101	9.6
Personal Service	863	118	12.0
Textile Workers	746	153	17.0
Others	4,759	1,082	18.5
Total	34,424	4,851	12.4

Source: Census of England and Wales 1931, Occupation Tables, London 1934, Table 18.

Table 9: Marriage among young males in Manchester, 1911-1961.

(a)

Date	Total	BOYS(15-19) Single	Married	Married as a % of the number in the age-group
1911	31,792	31,738	54	0.2
1921	33,020	32,869	151	0.5
1931	32,722	32,630	92	0.3
1951	18,810	18,723	87	0.5
1961	22,775	22,401	374	1.6

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1911, County of Lancaster, London 1914, Table 17; Census of England and Wales, 1921, County of Lancaster, London 1923, Table 14; Census of England and Wales, 1931, County of Lancaster (Part I), London 1932, Table 14; Census 1951 England and Wales County Report, Lancashire, London 954, Table 21; Census 1961, England and Wales, County Report, Lancashire, London 1964, Table 6.

(b)

Date	Total	BOYS (20-24) Single	Married	Married as a % of the number in the age-group
1911	30,935	26,268	4,667	15.1
1921	28,661	23,528	5,133	18.0
1931	33,839	29,108	4,731	14.0
1951	22,902	16,964	5,938	26.0
1961	22,116	15,334	6,782	30.7

Source: ibid.

Table 10: Marriage among young females in Manchester, 1911-1961.

(a) GIRLS (15-19)

Date	Total	Single	Married	Married as a % of the number in the age-group
1911	33,629	33,309	320	1.0
1921	35,311	34,771	540	1.5
1931	35,318	34,826	492	1.4
1951	22,862	21,858	1,004	4.4
1961	23,330	21,632	1,698	7.3

Source: ibid.

(b) GIRLS (20-24)

Date	Total	Single	Married	Married as a % of the number in the age-group
1911	35,407	27,025	8,382	23.7
1921	34,806	26,257	8,549	24.6
1931	37,340	28,774	8,566	22.9
1951	25,689	13,432	12,257	47.7
1961	22,247	10,336	11,911	54.0

Source: ibid.

Table 11: Youth Movement Membership In Manchester, 1917.

(a) BOYS

Organisation	14-18 Membership	Total Membership (10-18s)
Lads' Clubs	2,880	6,450
Boy Scouts	1,600	6,600
Church Lads' Brigade and Cadets	1,166	2,241
Catholic Boys' Brigade & Scouts	1,100	2,000
Boys' Brigade	814	2,378
Y.M.C.A.	750	1,050
Boys' Life Brigade	200	600
Other Cadets	172	234
Jewish Lads' Brigade	120	300
Street Children's Mission	75	195
Number of boys who belonged to a youth organisation in the city in 1917	8,877	26,048 *
Number of boys in the city in 1917	21,000	47,000

Source: Manchester Juvenile Organisations Committee, Handbook, Manchester 1918, p.8.

* Includes 4,000 10-14 year old boys who attended Evening Play Centres run by Manchester Education Committee.

(b) GIRLS

Organisation	14-18 Membership	Total Membership (10-18s)
Girls' Friendly Society	2,200	2,700
Girl Guides	1,875	2,411
Wesleyan Girls' Clubs	472	752
Girls' Institute, Mill Street	300	600
Jewish Girls' Club	250	250
Girls' Life Brigade	180	460
Catholic Girls' Club	140	160
Street Children's Mission	50	290
Ancoats Settlement	50	130
Number of girls who belonged to a youth organisation in the city in 1917.	6,017	12,853 *
Number of girls in the city in 1917	21,000	47,000

Source: ibid.

* Includes 4,000 10-14 year old girls who attended Evening Play Centres run by Manchester Education Committee.

Table 12: Boy Scout and Rover Membership in Manchester, 1921-1938.

Year	Number of Boy Scouts (11-17s) in the city	Number of Rovers (over 17s) in the city
1921	4,310	209
1922	4,165	199
1923	4,111	218
1924	3,796	287
1925	3,789	365
1926	3,657	367
1927	3,697	501
1928	3,808	599
1929	3,833	621
1930	3,989	716
1936	3,151	707
1937	3,200	587
1938	3,164	611

Source: Manchester and District Boy Scouts Association, Year Books, 1924-1940.

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